

LASALLIAN STUDIES

12

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORY OF
THE INSTITUTE OF THE BROTHERS OF THE
CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

20th Century

1928 - 1946

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BROTHERS OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

Generalate FSC - 476, Via Aurelia

00165 ROME

2008

French version: April 2007

English version: March 2008

Suplemento al n. 2 del 2008 della **Rivista lasalliana**
Trimestrale di cultura e formazione pedagogica della Associazione Culturale Lasalliana
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EXPLANATORY NOTES

The present volume LS 12 (1928-1946), continues the *Lasallian Studies* series which began in 1994 with LS 5 (1651-1726) and was followed by LS 6 (1726-1804) in 1997, LS 9 (1805-1875) in 2001 and LS 11 (1875-1928) in 2003.

In the text:

- Double quotation marks “” are used when a quotation comes from a document contemporaneous with the facts reported.
- Single quotation marks ‘’ indicate an expression or quotation from an historian of some other period.
- The surname and Christian name of a Brother are normally given the first time he is mentioned.
- The word “Brother” when used on its own refers to a Brother of the Christian Schools. Whenever it refers to a Brother of another congregation, this is indicated.
- The names of towns are given in the language of the country to which they belong except in cases where they are usually translated.
- In the case of French towns, the *département* to which they belong can be located on the map included in LS 9 on page 69.
- When a book is quoted or referred to for the first time, its title and author are indicated. On subsequent occasions only the author is indicated. More complete information can be found at the end of this volume.

Abbreviations

- GA: Generalate archives in Rome.
- LS: Lasallian Studies.

INTRODUCTION

THE OVERALL HISTORICAL CONTEXT

A series of crises

The 1930s were characterised by a series of crises involving the whole world. These crises overlapped one another, but in order to give a brief summary of each we will need to consider each one in turn. They laid the ground for another war which began in 1939 and which gradually spread to include the whole world. Some of the effects of these crises persisted during the conflict and at times contributed to it a rare degree of inhumanity. The end of the war in 1945 led to a re-alignment of nations under the aegis of two dominant powers.

Great economic Depression

The 1920s ended with a period of economic prosperity, based on an abundance of credit, and this led to financial speculation. On Thursday August 24th 1929, an enormous number of shares on offer in the New York Stock Exchange found no buyers and prices fell dramatically. This crisis destabilised the whole credit system on which the American economy was based. The resulting reduction in buying brought about a fall in agricultural and industrial production. This led to the bankruptcy of many businesses and an increase in unemployment. The withdrawal of American capital in particular from central Europe and Great Britain produced similar effects throughout the world. Between 1929 and 1933, world trade was reduced by two-thirds, and production by the main industrial countries by 50%. In 1932, the number of unemployed reached a total of 30 million in the world as a whole, 12 million of whom were in the United States.

The depression was too serious to resolve itself, and so governments were forced to intervene in the running of the economy. They began by reducing public expenditure in order to re-establish budgetary equilibrium, but a reduction in trading led to a decrease in fiscal revenue. The depression was thought to be also the result of over-production, and the solution adopted was to lower prices or limit production, which increased unemployment. Various countries thought the solution lay in inflation and the devaluation of the currency. The duration of the depression underlined its seriousness. The recovery began unevenly in 1933. However, in 1937, the best year before the war, industrial production in the capitalist world was only slightly better than it had been in 1929.

The situation varied from country to country. The most industrialised ones - the United States and Great Britain - initially severely affected, reacted fairly rapidly with effective measures. France, which had been affected later by the effects of the depression, found it more difficult to recover. Some countries, such as Italy, Germany and Japan, because of their lack of resources, were particularly affected by the depression. In countries such as Spain, where rural poverty was still endemic and industrialisation was creating a growing proletariat, the depression served only to aggravate the instability of the situation. Countries whose main income was derived from the exportation of agricultural produce and raw materials were badly affected by falling prices and a reduction in the demand for their goods. This was the case in Latin American countries and in the colonies in which production to serve the needs of the mother country had been developed to the detriment of subsistence crops.

Political crisis

The 1930s were marked also by a political crisis related to the economic crisis but due also to other factors, characterised by the appearance of totalitarian regimes, the destabilisation of democratic regimes and the development of nationalism.

– The appearance of totalitarian regimes

By a totalitarian regime we mean a manner of exercising political power, characterised by the desire to ensure the pre-eminence of the state, or of a race, of a social class, by a leader who considers himself to be the interpreter of the will of the people.

One could say that these regimes were one of the consequences of the First World War: the Bolshevik regime resulted from it; the establishment of Fascist regimes in Italy and Germany was no doubt spurred on by the frustration created by the treaties which ended the war; and the same was true of Japanese imperialism. The economic crisis which occurred in 1929 did not affect the Bolshevik regime, given its isolation; nor did it give rise to the other totalitarian regimes either, but it did contribute to their development. Italy, Germany and Japan were among those states that could be called “proletarian”, because they lacked natural resources. The crisis could only provoke their leaders to apply pressure on the victims of this crisis in order to pursue their own aims.

Established during the course of the First World War, the Bolshevik regime had imposed itself on the Soviet Union, formed of Russia and of the European and Asian countries it had conquered. While the crisis of 1929 had little effect on the country, that

same year witnessed the start of the implementation of Stalin's policy of collectivisation of land and of industrialisation. The plan to achieve these aims supposed great centralisation and required overriding authority. This authority was exercised by the Communist Party, itself controlled by the *politburo* and especially by its Secretary General, Stalin. When emulation no longer worked, leaders felt no compunction about using constraint. The regime extended its influence to include communist parties established in various countries and belonging to the *Komintern*.

When Mussolini came to power in Italy in 1922, he established a Fascist regime. Up to 1929, this regime did not pursue its aims to their logical conclusion. Its attitude hardened when the crisis came. When it finally affected Italy, Mussolini refused to devalue the lira, which inevitably aggravated the situation. In October 1933, the *Duce* rejected economic liberalism and opted for a corporative state. The economy was put at the service of the state. In 1935-1936, Mussolini pursued an expansionist policy. His alliance with Hitler in 1938 brought about the rapprochement of Italian fascism and German Nazism, and the alignment of Italy with the belligerent policy of Hitler.

In Germany, the beginning of the economic crisis coincided with a political crisis. When the election of the president of the Republic took place in 1932, the Nazis rallied the middle class which was hostile to large-scale capitalism and Marxism. On January 30th 1933, Hitler was appointed Chancellor. In order to combat the crisis, he isolated his country by establishing currency exchange controls and imposing autarky. 'Having attained power by legal means, Hitler established by stages a totalitarian regime defined by Nazi ideology' (*Précis d'Histoire contemporaine*, 501). He eliminated his principal rival in June 1934 by destroying the Nazi Storm troopers. The Reich became a unitary and centralised state. Hitler had unlimited power based on the premise of public support. For those who were tempted to resist, there was the secret police. Having dealt with communist militants, socialists and the trade unions, he turned on the Jews. Subsequent measures were part of Hitler's militaristic policy.

Japan was one of the countries lacking in natural resources and unhappy with the settlements following the 1914-1918 War, and this led to the development of nationalism. The economic depression which had a serious effect on the country reinforced the need to ensure a supply of raw materials by the conquest of new territories. Power was not based on Fascist doctrine, but was in the hands of the military who subordinated everything to the imperialistic policy pursued by the country.

– Destabilisation of democratic regimes.

Following the First World War, the way political institutions were run in democratic countries underwent a number of changes which were adversely affected by the economic depression. Whereas, up to then, governments depended closely on parliamentary assemblies, the establishment of a planned economy during the war had brought with it the reinforcement of executive power. The search for a solution to the economic depression followed the same path. In addition, up to 1918, universal suffrage had kept a class of leading citizens in power, but now the state had to take into account another type of person. New political parties, especially those based on the working classes (socialists and communists) had to be reckoned with. In some countries, parties, associations or leagues were formed which were opposed to democracy or, in particular, found their inspiration in Fascism.

In the United States, the economic depression strengthened the powers of the Democrat President Franklin Roosevelt elected in 1932. In March 1933, he took measures to save credit and limit production by increasing prices. At the same time, the State offered grants, organised aid schemes and launched major building projects financed by a budget deficit. This policy, known as the *New Deal*, went against the principles of economic liberalism. The result was to create an imbalance between the Federal State and the States of the Union. An appeal was made to the Supreme Court to intervene, and part of the *New Deal* legislation was cancelled.

In Great Britain, the birth of the Labour Party at the beginning of the century had spoilt the traditional pattern of two political parties taking turns to be in power, and had brought with it governmental instability. In 1931, even a Cabinet of National Unity was constituted. The economic depression made government intervention necessary: it devalued the pound and reverted to protectionism. The situation in the country did not lead to the formation of extremist groups. The British Dominions (Australia, New Zealand and Canada) had obtained legislative independence and had adopted the British parliamentary system. From an economic point of view, they were new countries. When the economic depression reached them in 1930, each of these countries adopted its own measures which, however, were similar to those taken by Great Britain.

Of the states of northwest Europe, the Scandinavian countries were not destabilised even when the depression favoured the rise to power of the social democrats. But the measures they adopted to combat the depression - stabilising the currency and credit - were inspired more by the example of Great Britain than by socialist doctrine. Their poli-

cies were more effective than those of the Low Countries which continued to pursue an orthodox budgetary and financial approach, or of Belgium which, with its more fluctuating policy, finally opted for favourable devaluation. In these latter countries, political parties were born which were overtly sympathetic to authoritarian right-wing regimes.

The French economy had only just recovered when the economic depression finally reached France. From 1931 onwards, what was most characteristic about the situation was that, faced with an economic depression that refused to go away, certain sections of the middle class formed Fascist-inspired “leagues”. On February 6th 1934, a demonstration organised by these groups was put down by force. In the face of the threat this posed, left-wing parties managed to unite to form the “Popular Front” which, in 1936, won the general election. Demands for social reform, backed up by a general strike, brought about an increase in salaries and a reduction in working-hours. The government was forced to devalue the currency. In 1937, the government was replaced by another which kept what had been achieved in 1936, but which had to lay social reform aside in order to restore a sound financial situation and to rearm.

Spain was a country which had difficulty in adapting to democracy. The economic depression had the effect of putting an end to the “benevolent dictatorship” of Primo de Rivera in January 1930. Following the victory of the Republicans at the municipal elections in 1931, King Alfonso XIII went into exile, and a republic replaced the monarchy. The period from 1931 to 1936 was characterised by social unrest which favoured the growth of an extremist right wing. The anti-Fascist coalition called the *Frente Popular* won the general election of February 1936. The government ‘was soon overtaken by events in the form of violent antireligious and social unrest...countered by the reprisals of Fascist groups’ (*Histoire générale du XX^e siècle* I, 290). The assassination of a right-wing leader sparked a military uprising in July 1936 which, having started in Spanish Morocco, then spread to a part of Spain. This was the beginning of a civil war with the Republicans and the Nationalists ranged on opposing sides. The victory of the Nationalist troops was finally assured in the period January to March 1939. General Franco, initially designated head of State by the Nationalists, ‘established a dictatorship, at one and the same time personal, military and clerical, but lacking in true totalitarianism’ (id, 292). In Portugal, the republican regime was replaced by a dictatorship in 1926.

In Latin America, the economic depression revealed the incompatibility between political independence and economic dependence for countries whose sole function was to export agricultural produce and raw materials. Politically speaking, it has always been difficult for representative democracy to assert itself when faced with a ruling class, or

with the perpetrators of a coup who confiscate power. In the 1920s and 1930s, the birth of a working-class proletariat and a middle class brought some diversification to political life, but 'the very instability which results from the increased difference of political tendencies gives credence to the need for strong authority which is above the confrontation of parties' (*Histoire générale du XX^e siècle*, 293). In Mexico, the autocratic regime established by the 1911 revolutionaries continued to hold sway in the 1930s under Presidents Calles, who gave an official status to the Institutional Revolutionary Party, and Cardenas, who was 'smitten with agrarian and national reformism' (id.). In Brazil, Getulio Vargas who came to power by a coup in 1930, established an authoritarian regime whose political philosophy was partly inspired by Fascism. In Argentina, in 1930, President Uriburu 'reduced the representative regime to a caricature in a country in which the Spanish and Italian origins of the population made it, more than anywhere else, openly sympathetic to Fascism' (id, 294). Chile, on the other hand, was characterised by its conservative authoritarianism and the beginnings of a Popular Front. In other countries, political life continued to be marked by the alternation in power of parties of opposing tendencies.

In central and eastern European states created after the First World War at the expense of the Austrian Empire and of Russia: 'Parliamentary institutions were rapidly swept away by armed force and replaced by authoritarian regimes' (*Le XX^e siècle*, 70). This was the case in Poland, Greece, Yugoslavia, Romania and Hungary. Czechoslovakia was an exception. Austria suffered greatly from the economic depression. Attachment to Germany was a possible solution and was strongly supported by the Nazis whose power was increasing in the country. Chancellor Dollfuss took refuge in an authoritarian system. He was assassinated on July 25th 1934. A threat of intervention by Italy prevented Germany from annexing Austria at this juncture. The new Chancellor Schuschnigg was forced to accept into his circle Nazis in favour of a "Greater Germany". In 1938 the *Anschluss* (attachment) of Austria to Germany was a step in the process which led to war.

– Development of nationalism

As was said earlier, countries unhappy with the diplomatic settlements put in place after the 1914-1918 War used them as a motive to encourage a nationalistic spirit among their populations. This was true of Turkey where nationalism 'under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal declared itself to be profoundly secular, resolutely state-controlled and voluntarily egalitarian' (*Le Monde et son Histoire IX*, 549). In the artificial states created on the ruins of the Ottoman Empire, the development of a nationalistic spirit gave rise

to rebellions in the inter-war period against the European powers under whose “mandate” they had been placed: France, in the case of Syria; Great Britain, in the case of Mesopotamia (Iraq). All the same, in 1936, a treaty made provision for the independence of Syria and Lebanon within three years.

A nationalistic spirit developed also in states placed under the domination of foreign countries. In 1919, there was unrest of a nationalistic nature in Egypt. It led to the establishment of a constitutional monarchy, but the British maintained their presence in the country. In the same year, there was unrest in India too. In the years that followed, the nationalistic movement took form around the figure of Gandhi, and discontent caused by the economic depression led Great Britain to give the country a political status similar to that of a dominion. On the other hand, in the Dutch Indies (Indonesia) and in French Indochina (Vietnam), the colonial authorities made no effort to introduce reforms as a first step to prepare these countries to become self-governing.

On the whole, the economic depression did not bring about the disintegration of the colonial empires, even though their populations had suffered greatly from the drop in sales of their products. In the case, in particular, of black Africa, the economic depression had instead bound more closely the complementary economies of the mother country and its colonies. When the Second World War broke out, colonies demonstrated their loyalty and supplied troops to the country on which they depended. It was during this war that the desire for emancipation became stronger.

International crisis

The last few years of the decade following the First World War were characterised by a détente in relations between countries. In the 1930s, however, international tension returned and progressively intensified. Some countries were still unhappy with the settlements following the war. In the period from 1929 to 1933, the efforts of international bodies to create solidarity between nations were defeated by the economic depression. In June 1932, a conference held at Lausanne, Switzerland, exempted Germany in full from financial compensation for the damage it had caused during the war. The League of Nations proved powerless in its attempts to oblige Japan to retreat from Chinese Manchuria which it had invaded in 1931, and which it had turned into a vassal state called Manchukuo.

With the coming to power of Hitler in 1933, relations between states changed. Germany left the League of Nations in October 1933, and regained its freedom to re-

arm. In that same year, Hitler became more vehement in his claims regarding German minorities in various countries. However, his attempt in 1934 to create a “Greater Germany” with Austria failed, and he promised Poland not to support the German minorities in that country.

From 1935 to 1937, three wars welded together the group of aggressive countries. Italy, already present in Eritrea and Somalia in the “Horn of Africa”, invaded Ethiopia in 1935. The League of Nations decided to apply economic sanctions to Italy, but they were ineffective. Italian troops entered Addis Abeba in May 1936. In that same year, Hitler ordered his army to re-occupy the part of Germany situated on the left bank of the Rhine which had been demilitarised in 1919. During the civil war in Spain, Italy and Germany gave their support to the Nationalist movement, while the USSR supported the Republicans. As for Japan, it continued to pursue its policy of expansion and prepared for its invasion of China, which it undertook in 1937. In November 1936, Germany and Japan had signed an anti-Komintern pact. Italy joined it in 1937, and Franco’s Spain in 1939.

In 1938, Hitler set out to create “Greater Germany”. Italy could no longer oppose the plan. On March 12th 1938, German tanks entered Austria. No country opposed this annexation. Hitler next set about annexing to the *Reich* the Sudeten population of German origin in the west part of Czechoslovakia. He was prepared to do this by force, but he obtained the right to do so during the conference held at Munich on September 29th 1938 attended by the heads of government of Germany, Italy, Great Britain and France. In 1939, Czechoslovakia was dismembered: Bohemia and Moravia were placed under the protectorate of Germany; Slovakia was declared independent. Hitler next set about Poland over what was called the “Danzig Corridor”, a strip of land separating East Prussia from the rest of Germany, which gave Poland access to the sea. To protect Poland from a German attack, France and Great Britain attempted to conclude a pact with the USSR. On August 23rd it was learned to everyone’s surprise that Hitler had made a non-intervention pact with the USSR, but a secret clause provided for the partition of Poland by these two powers. When the Germany forces attacked Poland, France and Great Britain declared war on Germany on September 3rd 1939. As for the USSR, it annexed a part of Poland and the Baltic countries, and attacked Finland.

A moral crisis

The economic depression had also had repercussions of a moral nature, some of which we shall try to indicate. We need to mention also the effect the economic and political

crises had on the religious plane and on matters connected with the Catholic Church during the period we are considering here, given the purpose of the present work.

– Aspects of the crisis

After the difficult years of the First World War, the 1920s ended with a return to prosperity, even if not everyone benefitted from it. All this was brought to a sudden end by the Depression. Those who had benefitted from the prosperity were affected; while others saw their hopes of a better future vanish. Particularly in the working-class parts of towns, 'hunger, cold and sometimes death were the fate of those who had never shared in the now vanished prosperity and who were the forgotten victims of the depression.... Unemployment led to social exclusion, even to delinquency... Material distress and the feeling the depression would never end combined their effects to give the impression that the population had undergone a moral collapse' (*Histoire générale du XX^e siècle I*, 175, 176).

By its depth and duration, the economic crisis produced a trauma which was at least equal to that produced by the First World War. It shook the very foundations of the liberal world of the 19th century, and especially, the fundamental principle of economic liberalism, namely, that of the non-intervention of the State in the running of economic affairs. In liberal democracies, governments had to resort to a system of planned economy and to the organisation of a social security system. As for totalitarian regimes, they took over control of economic affairs. The sorely tried populations were prompted in this way to put themselves into the hands of the powers that be.

The economic crisis also had an effect on the dominant cultural model of the liberal world based on 'individualism, the belief in technical and moral progress, scientism, optimism' (*Le Monde et son Histoire*, 301). In addition, 'the crisis reveals the strength of the counter-tendency of the masses opposed to individualism'. In industrialised countries, the irruption of these masses on the scene was nothing new - trade unions, workers' parties had been set up. With the onset of the crisis, the extent of this irruption could be measured 'by the widespread nature of unemployment, the paralysis of businesses, the impotence of governments' (id, 302). 'The new factor was the belief in an immanent national will... a sort of collective unconscious of the masses which the political class were unable to express, and which only certain exceptional beings, real mediums, were capable of feeling' (id, 303). Fascist regimes were founded on this belief. The exaltation of the nation, race and social class, leads to the subordination, and even to the negation of individuals if they refuse to allow themselves to be recruited, or if they are considered to

be 'beyond redemption'. This explains the support of the population for Fascist or Marxist regimes, as well as the sort of fascination these had for at least certain social classes in democratic countries.

– Religious aspects

As the intervention of states to alleviate the effects of the economic crisis was insufficient, Christian charitable institutions stepped in to help, even if they saw their resources diminishing. Catholic leaders found in the social doctrine of the Church an explanation of the causes of the economic crisis, and the means to remedy it. And so, in the United States, some institutions contributed to the establishment of the New Deal. In the general confusion, side-by-side with those who found support and comfort in the Churches, there were others who had or who were distancing themselves from them, and were hostile towards them, especially when anti-clericalism and Marxism combined their efforts. Fascism won over Christians who saw it as a guarantee of order and a bulwark against Communism. This was the case in Italy. In Germany, some Protestants rallied to the Hitlerian regime. On the other hand, the regime encountered resistance from Protestants belonging to the "Confessing Church", and from the members of the Catholic hierarchy, clergy, politicians and laity. These opponents were, by this very fact, among the first victims of the repressive Nazi system.

In the 1930s and during the war years, the Catholic Church was marked by the preponderant role of Church authorities in Rome who had come to the fore in response to the Modernist crisis. However, this crisis subsided and Rome showed itself more open to modern culture, and especially to the experimental sciences. The Papacy favoured the use of means of mass communication - the press, radio - and the Vatican radio broadcasting station was opened in 1931. A certain opposition persisted, on the other hand, regarding the human sciences - 'the case of psychoanalysis is hopeless' - or profane literature. In the latter case, a number of works were placed on the "Index". These included those of the Christian authors of the "literature of grace and sin", such as Bernanos and Mauriac. This same thing happened in the case of the spiritualist philosophers, such as Blondel and Bergson, in France.

The Roman magisterium subscribed to a hierarchical concept of the Church in which the apex was developed at the expense of the base. Through the influence in particular of priests who came to Rome to be trained in pontifical universities, this concept was disseminated throughout the Church. The spirituality propagated by the centre of the Church continued to be based on devotions such as those to the Blessed Sacrament, the

Sacred Heart and the Virgin Mary. Collective piety was expressed on the occasion of mass rallies, such as Eucharistic Congresses, pilgrimages, jubilees. On the apostolic plane, initial formation through the catechism continued to be the 'great public service' of the Church. Its aim was to inculcate in children a summary as complete and precise as possible of Catholic doctrine whose 'principal characteristics are orthodoxy, abstraction, deduction, self-satisfaction' (*Histoire du Christianisme* XII, 216).

At the same time, however, a "modern theology" was developing. It was new in the way it considered and used theology, abandoning the method based on authority and proceeding by way of induction. It was new also by its return to biblical, patristic and historical sources. Its various components merged in their pursuit of two main objectives: 'to offer a view of the Catholic faith adapted to the people of the 20th century, and to offer Christian solutions to the dilemmas which had or were still tearing them apart' (id. 177, 178). This evolution in theology was accompanied, especially in the French and German-speaking countries of Europe, by "minority tendencies which sought to base the spiritual life of the elite in particular, not on recent developments in Catholic beliefs, but on the heart of the Christian message' (id. 206). The kind of spirituality this gave rise to found its sustenance in the biblical and liturgical renewal taking place at that time. It led also to the birth of what was called "sacred art", which broke with the so-called "St Sulpice" style, and made free use of non-figurative forms which had become the trend in profane art. In addition, under Pius XI, the concern with defending religion gave way to an all-out apostolate. Under the form of Catholic Action, it was entrusted to the laity, while still remaining "hierarchical".

The Second World War

– Characteristics of the war

The new war which broke out in 1939 gradually spread to a great many countries and deserves even more than the 1914-1918 War to be described as *worldwide*. This characteristic will become all the more clear when we speak of the different phases of the war, and in the chapter which shows how the Institute was affected by the 1939-1945 War. It was a total war in the sense that it took over completely the economy of the countries drawn into it, and mobilised their population not only to fight, but also to produce massive quantities of increasingly perfected arms. It was also *ideological*, as it pitted Fascist and imperialistic states, on the one hand, against liberal democracies and, on the other, against the Soviet Union whose regime was founded on Marxism. This war took on also

an *inexpiable* character: civilian populations were not spared and, in totalitarian countries, both internal and external opponents were not only put into concentration camps, but were marked down for extermination.

Another characteristic of the Second World War has to do with its length - five and a half years for countries who joined the war in 1939. In this respect, the conflict can be divided into two phases. At this point, it will be enough to give an overall view.

1st phase

This was characterised by the victory of the totalitarian countries. In Europe, the German army, adopting *blitzkrieg* tactics (lightning war), overran Poland in September 1939. On May 10th 1940, it invaded the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg, and crossed the French border. The defeat of the armies of these countries culminated in the signing of an armistice on June 25th 1940. Italy, which had entered the war on the side of the Germans on the 10th of the same month, invaded Greece in October. Great Britain which, together with its Dominions, continued to resist alone, was spared an invasion by German troops, but was subjected to intense bombardments. In North Africa, the German General Rommel, having conquered Libya, proposed to invade Egypt. On June 22nd 1941, the German army invaded the Soviet Union, and advanced rapidly. Japan coveted the European colonies of Southeast Asia and, on December 8th 1941, to forestall any intervention by the United States, it sent its carrier fleet to destroy the American fleet based in Pearl Harbour in Hawaii. Between December 1941 and March 1942, Japanese troops overran the Philippines, Malaysia, Burma and the Dutch East Indies.

2nd phase

Between November 1942 and February 1943, a series of events marked a turning point in the war. The advance of Rommel's army was stopped at El Alamein. American troops landed in French North Africa (Algeria, Morocco). The German army laying siege to Stalingrad surrendered. The American victory at the Coral Sea naval battle in the vicinity of Australia put an end to Japanese conquests.

In this part of the world, the Americans began their counter-offensive against Japan. Rather than liberate the European colonies of Southeast Asia, apart from Burma, they decided to attack Japan itself, and they set about providing themselves with the intermediary bases which were indispensable for their air force and navy. On the Russian

front, a series of attacks beginning in July 1943 obliged the German army to retreat. The German army in North Africa, which had retreated to Libya, was forced to surrender. In July-August 1943, the Allies liberated Sicily. In Italy, Mussolini was deposed and a provisional government signed an armistice on September 8th. The Allies then proceeded to land troops at various points in southern Italy, but strong opposition from German forces impeded their advance.

Germany was not finished yet. Its new weapons, the V1 and V2 rockets, constituted a new threat to England. The opening of a new front in Western Europe proved necessary. On June 6th 1944, the allied armies landed in Normandy on the north coast of France. Another landing took place on August 15th 1944 on the Provence coast in the South of France. The Soviets, for their part, resumed their offensive in June 1944. By the beginning of 1945, the Allies had reached the western frontier of Germany. On March 7th 1945, they crossed the Rhine and advanced deep into Germany. The Soviets in their turn, had launched their attack in January 1945 and had reached the Oder. On May 5th, they entered Berlin, and Hitler committed suicide. Germany signed an “unconditional surrender” on May 8th. In Asia, by March 1945, the Americans had taken back from the Japanese the islands from which they could reach Japan, and had started bombing towns in Japan. As this bombing did not force Japan into submission, the first atomic bombs were released on Hiroshima on August 6th 1945, and on Nagasaki on the 9th. Japan agreed to surrender on August 14th, and the document was signed on September 2nd.

– The immediate consequences of the war

The loss of life resulting from the war was considerable, ‘if we add the civilian victims of bombardments, executions, deportation, famine and racial persecution to military losses...Altogether, perhaps 50 or 60 million living beings disappeared during the 1939-1945 war.’ To the loss of human lives can be added the material damage which affected not only the areas where battles were fought, but also those, especially in urban areas, which were bombed.

The two countries which started the war, Germany and Japan, underwent major changes, not because of the peace agreements, but as a result of settlements decided by the victors which, in most cases, ratified the military situation as it stood at the end of hostilities. Germany ceded territory in the West to the USSR and to Poland. Poland ceded territory in the West to the Soviet Union. Japan had to restitute not only the conquests it made during the war, but also its pre-war acquisitions Manchuria and Korea. The USSR benefitted from other territorial modifications in Eastern Europe. Germany

and Austria were divided into four military occupation zones, three of which were put under the control of the western Allies, and the fourth under that of the Soviet Union. In Europe, the countries liberated by the victors were divided up into spheres of influence: the eastern satellites of Germany fell under that of the Soviet Union.

The end of the war brought with it changes in political regimes. It marked the end of Fascism in Italy and of Nazism in Germany, as well as that of the totalitarian regimes which had been established especially in central and Eastern Europe. The war served to consolidate and advance democracy in countries where it already existed. On the other hand, the countries which had become satellites of the Soviet Union were immediately subjected to the control of communist regimes or began to feel the threat of the imposition of such regimes. The major factor on the world political scene was now the preponderance of the two powers which had shouldered the main burden of pursuing the war, the United States and the Soviet Union.

Among the consequences of the war we must include also decolonisation. The years preceding the war had prepared the ground for it: the war hastened it. 'The domination of European countries over overseas possessions lost its theoretical justification and, even more, the practical reason for its existence, from the moment they were no longer capable of protecting and keeping them in case of conflict. Moreover, indigenous nationalism had been strongly encouraged by Germany in the Middle East, and even more so by Japan in the Far East. The influence of their mighty conqueror, the United States, had the same effect.' (*Précis d'Histoire contemporaine*, 606).

CONTINUITY

When we look at the history of the Institute as a whole in the period from 1928 to 1946, we notice above all the continuity there is between this period and the latter part of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th. If events brought about changes, these changes did not all occur at the same time.

In the last years of the preceding period, which we called a time of trial, the situation of the Institute had improved following a period in which it had suffered, first from the passing of the 1904 law, and then, with wider repercussions, from the First World War. On the other hand, during the new period which began for it in 1928, it soon became caught up with the rest of the world in the economic crisis which began suddenly in 1929. In the 1930s, the Institute did not emerge unscathed, generally speaking, from the consequences of this crisis in the countries in which it was present. It was affected also in some of these countries by measures taken by political regimes whose hostility to the Church, in several cases, took the form of real persecution. These were exceptional cases; however, as most often, the Brothers were able to pursue their educational work without too many obstacles.

With the outbreak of the Second World War, the number of Brothers affected by the conflict in the countries where the Institute was present increased as the war went on. Some Brothers were personally involved and schools suffered as a result. In many countries, however, even in those directly affected by the war, this situation did not prevent the Brothers from continuing to work fairly normally. When the conflict ended, in most cases the Brothers rapidly resumed their activities. The war, however, had produced changes in attitudes which, in the Institute surfaced in the years that followed immediately.

During the period as a whole, the Institute continued to function in its usual way. The war caused some disturbance, such as when the Generalate was transferred elsewhere and communication became difficult, preventing Brothers in some parts of the world from maintaining regular contact with the Superiors located in the temporary headquarters of the Institute. Despite everything, nothing was altered in the manner in which the running of the Institute was envisaged, nor did the directives sent out by the Superiors reflect the turn of events. Likewise, the way in which Brothers implemented the directives they received was hardly affected by the overall context in which they found themselves. However, in the parts of the Institute more or less completely cut off from headquarters, local Superiors were obliged to make decisions, which gave these regions a cer-

tain degree of autonomy. As for Brothers living outside their community for one reason or another, they had to be responsible for organising their own lives. Both cases called into question the relatively uniform and rigid manner of governing the Institute. Certain Assistants and Visitors were aware of the problem but their sphere of influence hardly went beyond the Brothers for whom they were responsible.

In the years that preceded the Second World War, the Institute continued to grow slowly but steadily until 1936, when persecution broke out in Spain and Germany-Austria. Its effects combined with a progressive slowing down of admissions to the Institute caused a decrease in overall numbers. The war with its victims and the defections it facilitated inevitably added to this downward trend. On the other hand, a certain number of Districts did not reflect this trend and continued to grow regularly, even if, sometimes, they were affected by the war.

During these same years, the Institute continued to expand in various parts of the world. It became established both in countries considered to be Christian and in missionary countries. By comparison with previous periods in the history of the Institute, this expansion was limited. The missionary apostolate, however, was strongly encouraged, in particular by the Superior General Brother Junien Victor, and Brothers, especially in some Districts, answered his appeal with enthusiasm. Promises were made to send Brothers to new countries such as China, but the war put an end to all that.

On the apostolic level, the Superiors insisted in particular on some traditional aspects of the Brothers' work. The principle of gratuity was a case in point. General Chapters and the Superiors of the Institute insisted on this principle being applied as widely as possible without any dispensations. This was possible without any difficulty in Brothers' establishments funded or subsidised by the State, the local authorities or school trustees. It was more difficult when schools were private and depended on the generosity of benefactors.

The Superiors endeavoured to stimulate the zeal of the Brothers for the teaching of catechism. Many Brothers remained fervent "Apostles of the Catechism". In some countries, the Brothers were deeply involved in this apostolic work and sought to extend their influence around them. In others, on the other hand, they needed to be stimulated.

The Brothers were also encouraged to involve themselves in a new form of apostolate, called Catholic Action. Brother Superior Junien Victor relayed to the Brothers Pope Pius XI's appeal to the Church promoting this apostolate. In some countries, in particular, the Brothers responded to the impetus they had been given, by persuading their pupils

or former pupils to form Catholic Action groups. However, in some cases, these Brothers encountered difficulties in their dealings with the organisers of the movements with which they worked. Some found it difficult to join these movements. Elsewhere, Brothers considered the work they continued to do with pious associations to be a form of Catholic Action.

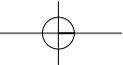
In 1946, a General Chapter was held in Rome to elect a replacement for the Superior General who had died in 1940. During the Chapter, a number of changes were made in the administration of the Institute, in particular to stress its international nature. A revision of the Rules was also undertaken. In the eyes of the Superiors, what this meant was - to use their expression - to re-establish the “authority of the Rule”. It meant also promoting a “religious renewal” in the Institute. This would help to maintain continuity in the Institute with the past, which it was their intention to restore. Where voices were raised asking for account to be taken of a change in mentality resulting from the situations in which the Brothers had been involved during the war, these voices were more silenced than listened to.

If 1928 has been chosen as the date to mark the beginning of this period in Institute history, it is because, in that year, a General Chapter was held in the Institute to elect a new Superior, Brother Adrien, the brother of the preceding Superior, Brother Allais Charles. In world history, however, 1929 is more significant as a turning point as it saw the beginning of the great international economic crisis.

Logically speaking, the end of this period should be 1945, the year in which the Second World War ended. But where the Institute is concerned, 1946 is more appropriate because of the General Chapter which was held in that year. While this period lasts only 18 years, these years were particularly crowded in world-history terms, but also in terms of Institute history, because of the effects that the significant events of the time had on it, even if its internal life was hardly changed by them.

The period has been divided into four chapters, each with a supplement on a particular subject:

- Chapter 1: The Institute in the world context (1928-1946).
- Chapter 2: The institutional framework (1928-1946).
- Chapter 3: Development and expansion of the Institute (1928-1946).
- Chapter 4: The Institute during the Second World War and the immediate post-war period (1939-1946).



Chapter 1 – THE INSTITUTE IN THE WORLD CONTEXT (1928-1946)

Introduction

When we considered previous periods of the history of the Institute (see *19th - 20th centuries*: Lasallian Studies 11), we found it necessary to start by describing the situation in France. The reason for this was that whatever concerned the Institute in France was very important for the rest of the Institute also. In the period under consideration here, this is no longer the case. Because of the increasingly international character of the Institute, the world context needs to be taken into account.

During the time of the Great Depression in the 1930s and during the Second World War, the Brothers were affected to a greater or lesser extent by the events which marked this period. In addition, some of these Brothers suffered also as a result of the policies, hostile to them, which were pursued in the country where they were. In this chapter, we shall concentrate in particular on these countries during the ten-year period from 1929 - 1939, and during the war-years in cases where the pre-war situation continued to exist.

Our approach may seem to be somewhat fragmentary. To have an overall view, one needs to consider this chapter within the context of the introductory chapter. Also, the supplement which follows this chapter deals in greater detail with the persecution suffered by Brothers in such or such country.

Repercussions of the economic crisis of the 1930s

The economic crisis which hit the United States in 1929 and spread to the rest of the world inevitably affected the Institute also. As far as its headquarters were concerned, their transfer to Rome had to be postponed. Because of a reduction in funds, various Districts found it difficult to maintain houses of formation and retirement homes for elderly Brothers. Some Districts were particularly affected. This was the case of Bogota in Colombia: when the financial consequences of its split into two Districts, and the imprudent management of its funds made it necessary to sell off some properties, it found it impossible to do so (cf. GA NT 810-1/1).

The difficulties encountered by Districts stemmed from those affecting their schools. This is the view taken in histories of the Institute in various countries, and in documents and studies relative to the crisis of the 1930s. For example:

- In the **United States**, the financial resources of schools and communities were greatly reduced. The situation was all the more serious as vast construction programmes had been set in motion in the years of prosperity (Battersby *The Brothers in the United States (1925-1950)*, 155).
- In **Canada**, the crisis was a disaster for school boards. Some of them reduced the Brothers' salaries, and this, in some cases, led to confrontations (cf. Voisine II, 309). The resources of fee-paying schools were reduced noticeably as parents found it increasingly difficult to meet their financial obligations.
- In **Malaysia**, the fall in the price of rubber caused much distress. Initially, in particular, it was difficult to fill classes because parents could not pay the fees (answer to a questionnaire).
- In **Cuba**, the fall in the price of sugar caused “an alarming decrease in admissions in most schools” (GA NR 100/4).
- In **Chile**, “Fee-paying colleges which experienced difficulties last year because of the non-payment of fees by boarders, have seen a reduction this year (1933) in the number of their pupils” (GA NT 400/1).

Also, in various places fee-paying colleges found it difficult to fund the free schools they maintained. On the whole, however, the crisis did not seriously hinder the Institute from pursuing its work and, after all is said and done, the effect it had on the Brothers was in no way comparable with the sufferings of millions of people reduced to destitution, in particular by unemployment.

The effects of anti-clerical policies pursued in various countries

The movement of secularisation born of the Enlightenment, which resulted in states wanting to strip the Church of all influence in the running of public affairs and social institutions, continued to spread all over the world. Taking various European states, including France, as their model, countries, particularly in Latin America, passed laws laicising education. These measures evidently affected the Brothers in those countries. On the other hand, in some countries where initially the policy had been applied rigorously, there followed an easing of the situation, from which the Brothers benefitted. This was the case particularly in France.

– **Mexico**

In 1929, Mexico was emerging from a period of open conflict between the State and

the Catholic Church. An agreement resulted in a reduction of tension, but this did not last long. From the end of 1931 onwards, various measures were taken or envisaged by the government to hinder the running of the Church and, more particularly, of Catholic private schools. For example, these schools were obliged to ensure that the education they provided was completely secular (GA NP 111-1/16); 90% of the teachers had to be Mexican; all new teachers had to have teacher training certificates; in practice, this excluded the young Brothers, because only the State could award this diploma (GA NP 111-1/17).

In 1934, under Lazaro Cardenas, the new President of the country, the Mexican Revolution entered a new phase: the President wanted the State to assimilate the Church (cf. *Histoire du Christianisme* XII, 970). Where the Institute was concerned, the *Colegio San Borja* and the free school depending on it were confiscated by the government in 1934. The Brothers were forced to close the primary school sections of their establishments, but in response to the wishes of parents, they secretly opened classes in private houses which children attended discreetly (in the period 1935-1937). The novitiate and the scholasticate were transferred to the United States. Some Brothers went to Cuba or to the other part of the Antilles-Mexico District. Finally, from 1938, and especially from 1940 with the advent of a new President, attitudes became more tolerant even though the laws remained in place. Despite the harassment of official inspections, existing establishments expanded; new schools were opened for the middle class. There were not enough Brothers, so lay teachers were recruited where possible from among former students (cf. GA NP 111-1/21).

– Nicaragua

In this country, a new political trend brought the liberals to power in 1929, and with it, a complete change for Institute establishments. The government rescinded the right of the Brothers in their teacher training college to confer the official diploma needed for teaching. Keeping its name *El Pedagógico*, it became a private college. In 1933, when the Brothers celebrated the 20th anniversary of their arrival in Nicaragua, the Brother Director decided to open a school for poor children. The school at Leon continued to function as a private college under the name of *Colegio Beato Salamon*. On the other hand, the *Colegio del Niño Jesus* in Managua and in Jinotega were closed.

– Colombia

When the liberal party came to power in Colombia in 1930, official hostility towards

the education given by religious communities manifested itself, where the Brothers were concerned, by their exclusion from the *Instituto Tecnico Central* in Bogota. One may wonder, however - as in fact the former Assistant Brother Viventien Aimé did in his report on the special visit he made in 1935 - whether this exclusion was not brought about by "the obstinacy of certain Brothers who refused to accept any changes in the curriculum of the Instituto Tecnico" (GA NT 800-2/9). In 1934, the Colombian government took certain measures regarding the teacher training college in Bogota which the Institute could not accept (cf. GA NT 810-1/2 - District Council meeting October 7th 1934). This led to the withdrawal of the Brothers also from its annexe, the free school for poor children in Chapinero. One of the means used to exclude Brothers from officially approved schools was to make them take proficiency tests. As many of the older Brothers refused to take the tests, the government replaced them with 'teachers committed to it' (*Los Hermanos De La Salle en Colombia*, 169).

According to a letter addressed to the Superior General dated April 3rd 1936:

"The Congress in session at this moment has set itself the task of reforming the Catholic constitution which the country has had until now, and making it unequivocally atheistic, especially where instruction and education are concerned. If this reform is adopted - which is very probable - our mission in Colombia is at an end" (GA NT 800-2/8).

The Brother Visitor of the District of Medellin wrote, for his part, on September 11th 1936:

"We are almost sure that at the end of the current year, the government will exclude us completely from the schools, and that we shall have to try to open small fee-paying schools" (GA NT 820/2).

The withdrawal of state funding put the Districts of Colombia, especially that of Bogota, in danger. In this District, the Brothers ran large establishments and had become accustomed to living quite comfortably. This, in particular, had a detrimental effect on their religious life, which explains why the Regime asked the former Assistant Brother Viventien Aimé, who had retired in Latin America, to make a special visit to Colombia in 1935.

In other countries, fears were expressed regarding measures hostile to the Brothers. In a letter, dated October 13th 1935, sent to the Superior General from **Ecuador**, we read:

"At the present moment, the Radical Liberal government which has come to power is threatening to expel all foreign religious, and appears to be adopting the Mexican poli-

cy regarding religion. I do not think this regime will last long...people here have difficulty in accepting the yoke of the Masons” (GA NT 700-6/1).

Regarding **Chile**, a *historique* notes the following:

– for the year 1937: “During the general elections, the radical and socialist press was violently provocative towards the Church in general and religious congregations in particular....The riots we feared did not materialise”.

– for the year 1939: “The October presidential elections were won by the *Frente Popular* candidate...Catholic institutions are under threat. We have to expect administrative measures intended to make life difficult for Catholic institutions, especially where education is concerned” (GA NT 400-1).

There is no indication that these threats were carried out.

– **France**

As the policy hostile to the Church which, in 1904, had resulted in the Brothers in France being forbidden to teach, was no longer in force, the Brothers were able to pursue their apostolic work without hindrance. However, laws concerning them specifically had not been revoked. They still had to wear secular clothes, except in houses whose closure had been suspended in 1914 (see LS 11, 130). Some Brothers, who were former soldiers, had taken to wearing the religious habit at the end of the First World War. Other Brothers continued to do likewise. For example, in 1931, when the Brothers of the District of Besançon returned to the boarding school at Dijon, they did so wearing the traditional habit of the Institute. At the same time, there was a real campaign in the District of Rheims to persuade Brothers to wear the religious habit again. And so, in the minutes of the District Council meeting held at Bettange in Luxembourg on January 3rd 1935, we read:

“Today, the last three communities in the District to continue wearing secular dress are reverting to the religious habit” (GA DD 284-2/3).

After the invasion of France by the German army, the government installed in Vichy in 1940 modified the terms of the 1904 law. As a result, there was no longer anything to prevent the Brothers from returning openly to their former way of life, including the wearing of the habit. Most of the Brothers began wearing the habit again at that point or a little later. Some of the older “secularised” Brothers were more reluctant to discard their secular dress, and put off doing so. As from 1942 onwards, religious congregations

could hope to obtain official recognition, the Secretary General of the Institute, who continued to reside in France, took steps with a view to obtaining this recognition. One side-effect of the measures passed to help religious was that the Brothers by and large supported the Head of State, Marshal Pétain. After the liberation of the country, these measures were not revoked, but there was no longer any question of trying to obtain official recognition for the Institute.

Consequences of the rise of totalitarian regimes

The rise of totalitarian regimes preceded the economic crisis of the 1930s, but it is certain that 'this crisis was a decisive factor in the development of national Socialism and parallel movements' (R. Rémond *Le XX^e siècle*, 118). In the same way, the crisis helped to give Communism a wider audience outside the Soviet Union. Both these movements caused problems for the Institute in several countries.

– Italy

Mussolini, 'Il Duce', had come to power in 1922. The Brothers had rather appreciated what he did for education (see LS 11, 174). In 1930, their schools were granted *parificazione* which put them on the same level as state schools, but did not provide funding. Likewise, in 1929, they were satisfied to see the Lateran Treaty settle the areas of contention between the Holy See and the Italian State: the Superior General congratulated Pope Pius XI on its successful outcome at an audience. Following the economic crisis, the regime became harsher. In 1931, a conflict arose between the *Duce* and the Church over Catholic Action and Catholic youth movements which the Fascist regime wished to control for the purpose of indoctrination. Pius XI reacted with his encyclical *Non abbiamo bisogno* on June 29th 1931.

From 1934, the regime 'embarked upon an unrestrained pursuit of colonial or national territorial claims, and took on a new dimension by its expedition to Ethiopia, the war in Spain and its alliance with Nazism' (*Le Monde et son Histoire* IX, 343). Catholics by and large supported the Fascist regime, but in 1938, as a result of this alliance, the annexation of Austria by Germany, and the occupation of Albania by Italy, some withdrew their support. According to an account of an audience granted by Pius XI to Brother Venanzio, Visitor of the District of Rome, it seems that the Brothers for their part had encountered difficulties in their relations with the Italian State at this time (cf. GA ND 102/6). This did not prevent the Brothers, in 1939, in making a positive response to the wish expressed by Pius XI to see them established in Ethiopia and Eritrea. When war

broke out in the West in 1940, Italy did not join Germany immediately. When it did so in 1940, there were repercussions for the Institute headquarters and for the Brothers of Italy.

– Germany

Before Hitler came to power on January 30th 1933, ‘outside of Bavaria, there was little response from Catholics to National Socialism’ (*Histoire du Christianisme* XII, 574). Catholics believed even that the Nazi regime had been granted some legitimacy by the signing of a concordat with the Holy See on July 20th 1933. The January 1934 issue of the *Bulletin of the Institute* recorded the event with much rejoicing. It was not long, however, before the Catholic Church began to suffer the consequences of the anti-Christian character of the Nazi regime. As the regime wanted to extend its control over young people, the Brothers found that they were particularly targeted. Already in 1935, the Brothers in Erfurt and Munster had asked permission to go out in secular dress because they no longer felt safe in these towns (GA NB 111-1/10). In 1936, the situation became particularly serious.

On August 7th 1936, four Brother Directors and two Brother Assistants, Athanase Émile and Hyacinth Maria - Brother Visitor Roderich being absent, having to remain in Switzerland - took stock of the situation regarding the various houses of the District and discussed which countries Brothers could be sent to. Among the decisions made at the meeting, we can note the following:

- Brother Directors will try to maintain all the houses for as long as possible;
- Scholastics pursuing university studies will continue to do so;
- To save the house at Kirnach, “our missionary contingent” will have to move;
- Brothers sent to other Districts will be only lent (GA NB 111-1/9).

From then on, houses were closed one after the other, and the Brothers moved to various countries in Europe, Southeast Asia and Latin America. A report on the Institute in central Europe, drawn up on January 1st 1939 by Brother Assistant Athanase Émile at the request of the Pope, noted that, regarding Germany, of the 16 establishments existing in 1934, there remained 11 on January 1st 1938. Only four of these had pupils, and two had been closed at Easter in that same year. The only school to exist officially was that of Hamburg, but then the Brothers there were considered to be seculars (GA NB 111-1/10). In September 1939, there were only 188 Brothers left. The war which broke out would bring further trials.

– Austria

In the report commissioned by the Pope already mentioned, we read that in Austria “the Brothers led an untroubled life under a basically Catholic government... All our schools benefitted from the *Offentlichkeitsrecht* which put them on the same footing as the state schools... When Germany took over Austria between March 11th and 13th 1938, the new ideology it brought sought to gain control over young people and induce them to adopt a new way of thinking...” The first establishment to be affected in this country was the Imperial Orphanage in Vienna from which its 35 Brothers were expelled. The Brothers thought they might be able to set up private schools, but a decree was published stating only lay persons belonging to the Party could be headmasters of such schools. At Strebersdorf, permission was refused to open a private boarding school, and the establishment was taken over by a state police college. Most houses were affected more or less in the same way. (GA NB 111-1/10). From a short work entitled *100 Jahre - Schulbruder in Osterreich* we learn that, by the end of 1938, all the Brothers’ schools in Austria were closed. Having been deprived of their right to teach and educate, the 200 or so Brothers there found they no longer had any means of subsistence. About sixty of them left the country (GA NB 401/15). The war which broke out in 1939 affected the Brothers in Austria in the same way as it affected those in Germany.

In **Hungary** and **Romania**, regimes of an authoritarian nature had come to power in the 1930s. But the Brothers in these countries, who belonged to the District of Austria, not only did not suffer on account of these regimes, but their establishments prospered. It was the same in **Poland**, and later in **Slovakia** when, in 1939, Germany dismembered Czechoslovakia.

– Spain

If we mention Spain at this point, it is first of all because the growing influence of bolshevik communism had become an ever-increasing threat for this country, and this threat had provoked a Fascist-type reaction. Following the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera, the success of the Republicans at the municipal elections of 1931 had led to the departure of King Alfonso XIII and the establishment of a republican regime. This regime satisfied only in part the aspirations of the masses, and ‘factory and agricultural workers were on the slippery slope to anarchic trade unionism, and listened to the exhortations of the Bolsheviks’ (Descola, *Histoire de l’Espagne*, 532). Encouraged by the passivity of the authorities, groups of anarchists set about attacking especially convents,

churches, and schools run by religious, such as *Las Maravillas*, a Brothers' establishment in Madrid, which they burned down.

The republican regime adopted measures hostile to the Church or opposed to Christian morals, such as the legalisation of civil marriages and divorce. In April 1933, the *Cortès* drew up a law concerning religious congregations, which, in particular, forbade their members to teach. The law was passed on May 17th. The year before, foreseeing that such a law would come into force, and fearing that the Brothers would be expelled from the country, the Brother Visitors of Spain had consulted a number of other Visitors about the possibility of Brothers from Spanish Districts transferring to their Districts. When the law was passed, a number of Brothers left the country. The majority, however, bypassed the law, by teaching in a private capacity, wearing secular dress. In order to protect their ownership of a large number of their establishments, the Brothers had set up the I.P.S.A. foundation (*Instrucion Popular S.A.*) in 1897. After the law was passed, this society recruited staff for Brothers' schools on a contractual basis. The staff recruited were Brothers. And so, in the year 1934-1935, Institute schools functioned more or less normally.

In October 1934, a governmental crisis led to a new wave of violence in the country. The government crushed it, except in Asturias. In this region, workers belonging to anarchist trade unions attacked not only their employers, but also representatives of the Church because of the social influence it had. Despite the fact that the Brothers had well-established roots in the region, they came under threat. At Turon, the eight Brothers who had replaced their colleagues at the start of the school year were arrested on October 5th and executed by firing squad on the night of the 9th. On March 23rd 1935, the house at Bujedo was burned down. On September 5th, however, the Brothers returned to Turon.

The 1936 elections brought to power by a narrow majority the *Frente Popular*, a heterogeneous coalition ranging from left-wing radicals to socialist or communist Marxists and to anarchist trade unionists, very strong in Catalonia, Aragon and Asturias. This victory encouraged popular civil unrest. Where the Institute was concerned, schools had to be closed because they were perceived to be run by religious. On the night of July 12th-13th, a leader of the monarchist movement was assassinated. On July 17th, a number of generals in the Canary Islands and in Morocco staged a revolt. Garrisons in Spain took up arms. The country found itself divided into three parts, two of which were controlled by the "Republicans", and the third by the insurgents of the "National Movement". In the zones controlled by the Republicans - called also the "reds" by their opponents and

victims - a wave of unrestrained violence was unleashed in particular on priests and men and women religious. The effect this had on the Brothers is described in the **supplement** that follows.

The suppression of members of left-wing parties, trade unionists and teachers by the “Nationalists” was just as ruthless. With the help of the German and Italian Fascist regimes, the “nationalist” zone was progressively extended from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic coast in the West of the country. In this zone, in September 1936, General Franco was proclaimed head of the government. In that same month, the Brothers were able to take up their work openly in schools again. It was the same also in the parts of the country taken back from the “Republicans”. However, the Brothers found they had to do military service. This continued until October 1937, when the Secretary for War dispensed them from this obligation. Previously, they were given this dispensation when they went to work in the colonies. In 1938, after four months of fighting on the Ebro,



the “Nationalists” entered Catalonia and, on January 26th 1939, Barcelona. They took control of Madrid on March 28th. On April 1st 1939, the war came to an end.

The growing influence of the communists in the government-controlled zone could have led to the establishment of a Bolshevik regime if their side had won the war. On the other hand, General Franco had established a Fascist-type of regime in the zone he controlled, which he extended to the rest of the country after the war. However, unlike the Nazis, he made the Church one of the pillars of his regime. It is understandable that, after all it had suffered, it offered this regime its full support, running the risk of becoming too much its vassal. One can say the same thing about the Institute which, in the years that followed the end of the civil war, reconstituted its forces, although the losses it had suffered prevented it from returning to all its previous institutions.

The impact of the growth of nationalism

The glorification of nationalism was one of the ways totalitarian regimes exercised leverage. In various other countries, it was a way of combating foreign influence which continued to affect them. Often, this reaction also had a religious dimension. During this period also, other forms of nationalism were born or developed. We shall consider three countries in particular which, in the context of the Institute, formed a single District.

– Greece

In 1930, the Greek government decided to forbid Greek children to attend foreign primary schools. According to a circular published by the ministry of Public Instruction, “the violation of this directive entails the immediate closure of foreign schools” (GA NG 501/2). The same circular states that this directive is due to be enshrined in a parliamentary bill, but that it is applicable “immediately”. On September 16th 1930, the President of the “National federation of Hellenic Catholics” protested against this decision, seeing it “as one more example of the anti-Catholic policy of the Government” (GA NG 501/2). Greek Catholics, who were very much a minority, could in fact send their children to foreign religious schools to have them educated in conformity with their religion.

As for the French schools, the Provincial of the Marist Brothers wrote to the FSC Secretary General, Brother Giraud, on November 30th 1930, saying that “in Paris there is much concern regarding the school question, and it is believed that there is a real danger of the almost complete destruction of French influence in the Orient” (GA NG

501/2). In reality, according to a letter from the same Brother Giraud in September, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs had received an assurance that “French schools which admitted Greek children to their primary classes that year would not be prosecuted” (id.) The three Institute establishments belonging to the District of Istanbul (former Constantinople) adapted to the new situation. A letter dated February 10th 1932 from Brother Jean Marc, the Visitor, states that “our schools in Salonika and Piraeus are recognised as Graeco-French secondary schools (gymnasia)...The school at Syra is recognised as being a demotic (primary) Greek school with two secondary school classes. French continues to be taught there all the same” (id). But in 1935, the Brothers encountered a new difficulty: a police regulation forbade an increase in foreign personnel in these schools, whereas the Institute had received permission to replace the elderly Brothers who were spending their retirement there.

Schools run by Italian Brothers in Greece were also affected. A *historique* of the Athens community mentions a directive from the Ministry of Public Instruction forbidding all foreign schools to admit pupils of Greek nationality, whether Orthodox or Catholic. On October 6th 1930, the school opened with 60 pupils, all Italian apart from a dozen, in the hope that the directive given would be rescinded (GA NG 511/2). The Brothers withdrew from this school in 1931. A note from the *Consolato di S.M. il Re d'Italia* in Patras, dated September 14th 1931 and addressed to the Director of the Brothers' school states that, “In addition to the boys' primary school for pupils of non-Greek nationality and for Catholic pupils, whatever their nationality, a middle commercial school will be established in this town in time for the start of the next academic year” (GA NG 516/3). Clearly, a dispensation had been given to Greek Catholic pupils. Regarding the school run by the *Associazione Nazionale per i Missionari Italiani* in Corfu, the journal for the year 1930 has a N.B. indicating that “With the application of the Greek law regarding foreign schools, the 14 Greek pupils in the primary section will have to leave our school and attend the Greek primary school” (GA NG 514/4).

– Turkey

In 1931, Turkey adopted a measure similar to the one taken by Greece for previous year. A directive published by the Ministry of Public Instruction dated June 2nd 1931 states that

“Turkish citizen children who have not received their primary school education in Turkish schools will not be admitted to the primary school classes of foreign schools” and later, “care will be taken to ensure, except in the case of children

admitted to the primary school classes of foreign schools before the promulgation of the law, that children admitted to foreign secondary schools have received their primary school education in Turkish schools” (GA NH 601-2/12).

The effects of such a measure soon made themselves felt. A table accompanying a report sent to the French Ambassador reveals that the number of pupils in Brothers' schools in Istanbul had dropped from 2,045 in 1930-1931, to 1,773 in 1931-1932, and to 1,463 in 1932-1933 (GA NH 601-2/13). An “explanatory report” enclosed with a letter sent by “the Brother Visitor of the Province of Istanbul to H.E. the President Herriot” - who at the time was Minister of Foreign Affairs in France - gives several other reasons “for the very significant and increasing diminution of our schools in Turkey”. It concludes by noting “that powerful nationalistic and anti-foreigner propaganda is secretly undermining our French schools” (GA NH 601-2/14).

While the motives of the Turkish government were inspired by nationalism, there was also another factor involved. Mustafa Kemal had established a lay regime and was committed to ensuring its lay character was respected. And so, in April 1933, a directive sent to foreign educational establishments forbade them to admit pupils, including Catholics, during the holidays, and to take them to church. On December 13th 1934, the *Official Gazette* in Ankara, the capital of Turkey, promulgated a law concerning “The prohibition of certain forms of dress”. Article 1 states, “Clergy, whatever their religion, are forbidden to wear religious dress except in places of worship and religious ceremonies”. The government could, however, authorise “an individual religious approved by it” to wear such dress outside of the places indicated (GA NH 601-2/15). A letter sent by Brother Alexis François, Procurator to the Holy See, to Brother Assistant Gordien Désiré makes the following significant comment: “Mgr Roncalli - the future John XXIII and Apostolic Delegate to Turkey at the time - told me that religious had decided to withdraw rather than abandon their religious dress. But, he added, the Holy Father wants them to remain there as long as possible” (GA NH 601-2/15). In practice, even the Sisters who were most attached to their religious dress followed the directives of the Holy See. As for the Brothers, the “older ones who were averse to giving up the habit they had worn all their religious life, abandoned Turkey rather than their habit”. (*Les Frères des Écoles Chrétiennes en Turquie*, 142).

Foreign schools had already been obliged to ensure that Turkish language, history and geography, as well as civic instruction and sociology, were taught not only to Turkish, but also to foreign pupils, by Turkish teachers appointed by the Ministry of Public Instruction. On February 15th 1937, the same Ministry instructed these schools to cre-

ate the post of an Assistant Headmaster “who would be responsible for admission procedures in Turkish and for correspondence in that language”. It stated also that “the Assistant Headmaster will be proposed, for the time being, by the Director, from among the teachers at the school appointed by the Ministry” (GA NH 601-2/17).

In 1939, after the closure of the primary schools, to the detriment of Catholic, or at least Christian, Turkish pupils, the only establishments the Brothers had in Turkey were three secondary schools: Kadikoy and Ferikoy in Istanbul, and St Joseph’s in Izmir (Smyrna). During the 1939-1945 war, these establishments suffered from the departure of some Brothers who had been called up for military service, and continued to be harassed by the authorities, but were spared the consequences of the conflict, as Turkey was not involved in the war.

– Bulgaria

In 1930, in a report sent to the Propaganda Fide, the Brother Visitor of the District of Istanbul compared the situation in Bulgaria to that in Turkey, with one difference: the nationalism found there was accompanied by anti-Catholicism due to the predominance of the Orthodox religion. However, a report sent in 1939 to the Superior General regarding the situation in Turkey, Greece and Bulgaria, notes that in the latter country “greater liberty is enjoyed, but it is regrettable that the imposed school regulations had removed from our schools a certain number of very poor Catholic children of the Slavonic rite”. We read also that “the recitation of prayers and the teaching of religion are not regulated, that is controlled, as they are in the two other countries” (GA NH 601-2/18).

– Other manifestations of nationalism

Nationalism took other forms also which affected the Brothers. An increase in antagonism between different countries could be a source of friction among Brothers. This was the case in 1933 in the District of Ecuador, where a clandestine group denounced the fact that many of the posts of responsibility were occupied by foreign Brothers, and called for the departure of certain French Brothers. This, it would seem, was why Brother Zacharias, the Visitor General at the time, made a special visit to the country in 1935 (cf. *El Instituto de La Salle en el Ecuador*, 247). The strong nationalist feelings which followed the end of the Civil War in Spain explain perhaps the reaction of young Brothers, coming from this country, towards French Brothers occupying posts of responsibility in the District of Panama, as we read in the correspondence received by Brother Assistant Athanase Émile from this District in 1939 (GA NP 400-2/1). Regarding the growth of

nationalist feelings in countries subject to colonial rule, while there was no sign of it among the indigenous Brothers before the war, no doubt it coloured in some degree the reactions of these Brothers after the war.

Conclusion

We have dwelt on a number of situations involving Brothers, especially in the period from 1928 to 1939. But, by limiting ourselves to a few countries, it has not been possible to highlight some other effects of current events on the Brothers. A brief mention of some of these aspects will serve to widen the view we have of the context in which the Brothers found themselves in the period now under consideration.

We have shown, first of all, that the Brothers were affected in various countries by measures tending to reduce the influence of the Church in society and, in particular, in the field of education. In other countries, they felt threatened by similar measures. For those who were affected by them, such measures seemed to be so many manifestations of hostility on the part of public authorities. In fact, they were part of a developing worldwide movement of secularisation. They were also the expression by an increasing number of states of a desire to take over the education of young people and supplant the Catholic Church which had involved itself in this field. Unaware of the changes which were taking place, the Brothers found it difficult to understand what was happening to them.

We have seen how what we called the rise of totalitarian regimes affected the Brothers in different countries, but it had repercussions also elsewhere. Although Bolshevik communism did not succeed in establishing itself outside the Soviet Union, independently of the role it played in the Spanish Civil War, it won over not only workers, but also intellectuals in countries considered to be 'democratic'. While it does not seem to have influenced the Institute in this way, it did inspire a very strong anti-communist feeling among some Brothers, as in Canada and Spain. We have outlined the consequences for the Brothers of the establishment of Fascism in Germany and Italy. We should add that, in some other countries, some Catholics, including Brothers, were attracted to political movements inspired by Fascism. Generally speaking, this was through aversion for communism, but in France, an added factor was antipathy for the republican regime because of the policies it had pursued at the beginning of the century, the memory of which was still fresh in their minds. On the other hand, we see, for example, the Brother Visitor of the District of Panama, a Frenchman, highlighting in his correspondence with the Vichy government *Chargé d'affaires* in 1941, that Pius XI had condemned Nazism as well as communism (cf. GA NP 400-2/2).

The measures inspired by nationalism which affected the Brothers in various countries were seen by them as so many ways of obstructing their apostolic mission. They were seen equally by these Brothers, many of whom were French, as a way of limiting the influence of their country. The resulting frustration was all the greater as these Brothers and others finding themselves in a similar situation, tended subsequently to retreat into their establishments, neglecting, for example, to learn the language of the country in which they were. Elsewhere, a feeling of superiority on the part of 'westerners' could lead Brothers who came to a country as 'missionaries' to consider 'indigenous' Brothers inferior.

1 - THE BROTHERS SUBJECT TO PERSECUTION

In the course of the history of the Institute, the term “persecution” has been readily used to describe situations where the Brothers have incurred the hostility of public authorities. This is particularly true of the period under consideration here. What actually happened during this period in the countries we considered in the preceding chapter? This is the question we should like to try to answer in this supplement.

If, according to one definition, persecution is ‘bad, unjust and cruel treatment’ (*Petit Robert* dictionary), the fact itself is not seen in the same light by its victims and by those who inflicted it. The former readily identify themselves as the object of the persecution, while the latter readily defend their decision to have recourse to such measures.

Also, persecution takes different forms when it occurs. In some cases, it can be called open persecution, in the sense that it is deliberately inflicted and often leads to violence and death. In other cases, even though its perpetrators dissimulate their intentions and do not go so far as to use violent means, they still inflict real persecution. On the other hand, recourse to violence even to the point of bringing about the death of persons of a religious character, is not necessarily linked to a context of persecution.

These distinctions will help us understand the types of situation in which Brothers in various countries found themselves in the period 1928 to 1946. However, we can give only a simple outline of what happened: a subject as sensitive as these calls for a much more detailed treatment than is possible here, if it is to be satisfactory.

Mexico

In Mexico, as early as 1913, following the violent seizure of power by Victoriano Huerta, the Brothers had suffered from the effects of his anti-religious ideas and of the revolutionary conflict which had broken out in the country. For example, the revolutionary group which occupied the town of Monterrey accused the Brothers of supporting the federal government, put them in prison and fined them heavily. The Brothers were finally released on condition they left the country immediately. On June 23rd of the same year, the federal troops were defeated at Zacatecas by Francisco Villa who made a triumphant entry into the town. The following day, the Brothers were imprisoned and two of them shot for reasons which were dubious if nothing else (see LS 11, 222). On being informed of the event, on August 14th 1914, the Brother Visitor Nicéas Bertin ordered the Brothers to leave the country.

Ten years after the beginning of the Mexican revolution, two generals who, as Presidents, had assumed full powers over the country, had pursued their aim to implement the agricultural, industrial and anti-clerical laws of the 1917 Constitution. The situation of the Church and of the Catholic schools had become increasingly difficult. But it was above all in 1926, under the dictatorial regime of General Calles, with the implementation of the directives contained in article 130 of the Constitution, that the State launched its frontal attack against the Catholic Church. The Catholics refused to submit and, to the cry of *Viva Cristo Rey!*, civil war broke out. This was the fight of the *cristeros* (1926-1929). The tentative solution found in the agreement of June 21st 1929 brought peace that was both illusory and short-lived.

Did those who seized and then wielded power intend explicitly to persecute the Church? Not necessarily, but the brutal way they behaved could lead one to believe so.

In these circumstances, the Brothers, many of whom had already been victims of the 1904 law in France, shared the feeling of other Catholics that they were being persecuted, and consequently believed that the Brothers shot at Zacatecas were martyrs. Nevertheless, in 1916, defying the threat that this might pose for them, some Brothers, in secular dress, had re-occupied three schools in Mexico City, and had opened a junior novitiate at San Borja on the outskirts of this town.

Two years after the 1929 agreement, there was already reason to believe “that the Mexican government was going to persecute the Catholic Church again”, as we read in a letter from the Brother Visitor Alcime Marie (Louis Beyla), dated December 31st of that same year (GA NP 111-1/14). In fact, the authorities wanted to impose secular education everywhere, and this included private Catholic schools, which explains the measures taken against the latter in the years that followed. In this situation, however, whereas the Archbishop of Mexico City and the Jesuits were in favour of a direct confrontation with the authorities, the Brothers preferred to resist in a more prudent manner by evading the law in their establishments.

But it was above all the arrival of Lazaro Cardenas as Head of State in 1934 which, in practical terms, ushered in a new and very difficult phase especially for Catholic schools. Where schools were concerned, the President intended to establish a system of “socialist” education, which excluded all religious doctrine and sought to “combat fanaticism”. For four years, the government tried to impose this system. It is in this context that the Brothers, because of the close watch kept on them, closed the primary classes in their schools and opened others in private houses with the complicity of parents. Evading the

vigilance of the public authorities, they succeeded in this way in teaching as many as 900 pupils in Mexico City. Pressure on them diminished, especially from 1940 onwards, even if anti-religious legislation remained in force, and the Brothers were able to pursue their educational work more easily, not only in Mexico City, but in other places to which they had returned or where they had established new schools. They had to continue, however, wearing secular dress. The pupils, for all that, were not fooled; they could pick out the Brothers whom they addressed as “Messié” - a word derived from French - while they addressed lay teachers in the usual way as “Señor” or “Profesor”.

During this new phase, the declared intention of those in power to destroy religion was ample justification in Mexico for Catholics to believe they were being persecuted again. The Brothers shared this feeling, even if their way of dealing with the persecution was discreet and, by their prudence, they avoided confrontation, choosing to pursue their apostolic work with children and young people in private houses or in their own establishments, and avoiding everything that could provoke reprisals on the part of the anti-religious authorities.

Spain

There was no doubt in the minds of the Brothers who experienced it that, from 1931, but especially from July 1936 until 1939, they were targeted by the persecution inflicted on the Church in Spain. This persecution took different forms depending on when it occurred.

When the Republic was declared in 1931, the new regime was determined to strip the Catholic Church of the influence it exercised over the social structure of society, and in particular, over schools, young people, women and the social calendar. The first measures to implement these intentions rapidly revealed the hostility of the authorities towards the Church. Likewise, the passivity of these authorities regarding violent attacks on the Church could be considered to be a form of complicity on their part with the perpetrators.

The unjust nature of the 1933 law concerning religious congregations left no doubt in the minds of those it affected that it was a form of persecution. There is no proof that this was the original intention of the authors of the law. Their intention was as much to clarify the position of religious congregations in relation to this law, as to exercise control over them - as had been the case in France in 1901. While the prohibition of religious to teach in Spain was intended to reduce their influence, it corresponded also to

the desire on the part of the State to increase its own involvement in the development of education in the country. If the revolutionary episode in 1934, which the government was unable to control in Asturias, had a pronounced anti-clerical character, this stemmed from the fact that among those whom the revolutionaries considered to be responsible for their harsh living and working conditions, they included 'Church people' and among their number, the Brothers.

In 1936, the *Frente Popular* won the general elections and came to power for a short period. Ideological positions were hardened. As one historian wrote, highlighting the polarisation which had taken place: 'One half of Spain listened to the pronouncements of the Komintern. The other half watched feverishly the rise of Italian Fascism and of Hitlerian National Socialism' (Descola, *Histoire de l'Espagne*, 539). From February to June, with at least the tacit agreement of the public authorities, uncontrolled elements set about attacking clergy and Church property.

In July, a part of the army rebelled against the Republican regime and civil war broke out. The episcopate as a whole gave its support to the 'National Movement', and most Catholics did the same. However, in the Basque Country and Catalonia, Catholics supporting the ideas of the Nationalists regarding local autonomy, were in favour of the "Republican" government. The same can be said of the Brothers.

'In the zone controlled by the Republicans, unbridled and vicious anti-clericalism broke out' (*Sembraron con amor*, 533). This violence targeted in particular members of the clergy and of religious congregations, but also Catholics involved in Catholic Action or in society, which classifies it as religious persecution. In practice, the source of this persecution was not entirely the government established first in Madrid and later in Valencia, nor the local governments which had sprung up in various regions, such as Catalonia, in particular. Rather, frequently, its perpetrators were groups which evaded the control of these governments and of local authorities. Most often, those involved were "militiamen" who had joined up to fight on the front, but also to hunt down those they considered to be internal foes. Other armed groups were even more autonomous. All this made for a fairly widespread state of anarchy, at least initially. On the other hand, where the communists were in control, they imposed their own form of dictatorship.

The Brothers were victims in various ways of the persecution inflicted by the "reds" in the "republican" zone. Because of the threat which hung over them, most Brothers had to leave their community when the civil war broke out. In the frontier zones, some Brothers managed to make their way abroad, particularly to France. Some took refuge

with their families or with friendly people; others took lodgings in hotels. These dispersed Brothers lived under the constant threat of being recognised; some had to change their refuge frequently, because of the danger incurred by those who gave them shelter.

The fate of these Brothers could change at any moment, during an identity check by a group of militiamen, or worse, by one of the “security-check patrols” established by the “republican” government. Those caught up in one of these checks were normally taken to be interrogated by the police or by the local revolutionary committee which decided whether to arrest them and transfer them to a place of imprisonment. For those who were not executed while being transferred (see later), this was the beginning of their life in prison. Brothers who remained in their community could suffer the same fate. Such was the case, for example, of 59 Brothers, including the Brother Visitor, of the community in Griñon, who were arrested and imprisoned in Madrid. When they were guarded by the regular police, the Brothers led a relatively peaceful life. Those who fell into the hands of the militia, on the other hand, suffered from the cruelty and sadism of their captors. In addition to the anguish arising from the uncertainty regarding their future and their safety, the prisoners underwent physical suffering due to their condition. However, when their detention was prolonged, some Brothers managed to organise themselves and even lead a particularly intense community life.

To pass judgment on those it considered to be its enemies, the republican government set up people’s courts by a decree dated August 24th 1936. Some Brothers had to appear before them. This was the case of the imprisoned Brothers from Griñon who were ‘absolved’ at the end of 1936, which did not prevent them from being re-arrested later. Some were sent to “auxiliary fortification battalions”, which in practice meant hard labour. In most cases, however, the only penalty these courts recognised was the death sentence. However, the semblance of justice represented by these courts was not widespread.

Documents relating to the trial of Brother Jaime Hilario (Manuel Barbal Cosan) give some idea of the judgments handed down. The court, which lacked nothing, neither jury nor defence, followed a very strict procedure, to judge by the number of documents drawn up. Of these, the report of the prosecuting counsel stated that, on July 17th of the previous year, the defendant had engaged in Fascist activities connected with the military rebellion and the Fascist movement. It concluded that this constituted a crime punishable by the death penalty. The defence counsel, for his part, maintained the defendant was not guilty, while the jury

declared him guilty and called for the death penalty. It was only when the court pronounced its sentence that the fact was mentioned that the defendant, at the age of 20, had joined a religious order. This fact, however, was not included among the reasons given for the death penalty. And so, it would appear, that no motive of a religious character was invoked in pronouncing the sentence!

We see, then, that some Brothers were condemned to death and executed in a 'legal' manner. From what we know, it seems these cases were quite rare. Other imprisoned Brothers were put to death without trial. It also happened that militiamen shot imprisoned Brothers on their own initiative. Other Brothers were executed in the place where they were arrested. This was the case of the 10 Brothers who had stayed behind at Griñon who were executed in front of the community chapel. But what happened most often, at least in the case of Brothers who were alone when they were arrested, was that those charged with transferring them to prison stopped at some isolated spot or cemetery and executed them.

What we have just said occurred above all at the beginning of the civil war. Between July 17th and August 15th 1936, 58 Brothers were killed (cf. *Sembraron con amor*, 547). In 1937, the situation was somewhat calmer, but despite that, a number of Brothers were shot. Others were shot as late as 1938. In all, when the war ended in April 1939, 157 Brothers had been put to death, and when we add the 8 Brothers of Turon, the total number rises to 165. The District of Barcelona alone lost 97 Brothers.

We may wonder how such a torrent of hatred and violence could have been unleashed. Generally speaking, it can be explained by a state of war in which each side justified its own reprisals by those of the other side. But, more particularly, how can we explain why this hatred and this violence was directed towards those who were more representative of the Church, in a country with a long tradition of Catholicism, even if dechristianisation had made inroads in particular among the working classes? One factor, certainly, was the anti-clericalism which had affected first the intellectuals and then the working classes. Among the working classes, in particular, this anti-clericalism had been reinforced by the influence of marxism, according to which religion was an obstacle to social progress. As to the force of the violence that was unleashed, it seems that its source was the state of anarchy which the public authorities were unable to repress: men - that is, human beings - armed and unrestrained, are capable of everything!

Germany - Austria

With regard to Germany and Austria, various sources reveal clearly the avowed hostility of National Socialism towards Christianity. In these two countries, the sufferings of the Brothers began quite soon after the establishment of Nazism in Germany, and the annexation in 1938, in Austria.

As we read in the *Historique du District d'Allemagne* (GA NB 111-1/unclassified file), the National Socialist party “was founded allegedly on the basis of positive Christianity; the two denominations, Catholic and Protestant, would be protected by the State; the concordat between the Holy See and the Empire stipulated this clearly”. In reality, the doctrine of National Socialism was incompatible with Christianity, as Pope Pius XI stated in his encyclical *Mit brennender Sorge*, in 1937.

In his description of the resulting situation, in a report he drew up in 1936 - and which he asked not to be published - Brother Aldomar Kilian (Johan Schmitt), who was Visitor of the District of Germany from 1936 to 1941, was particularly clear-sighted when he wrote:

“Persecution seems to have reached a peak. According to those who govern us, there is no wish to make martyrs of German priests and religious. They use all kinds of means to bring them into disrepute...As the currency trials did not produce this result, they are trying to achieve this goal by taking as many priests and religious as possible to court on charges of immorality...We are not sure we shall be teaching much longer in Germany, because religious are seen as being incapable of forming the present generation in Germany, since they are not, and cannot be National Socialists” (GA NB 111-1/10).

The *Historique* quoted above explains what was happening. First, the Nazis tried to take congregations to court, accusing them of taking out loans abroad without prior authorisation from the government. Where the Institute was concerned, various houses came under scrutiny. The investigations concentrated on those in Königswinter and Kirnach, the District headquarters. The Directors and bursars of these houses underwent long interrogations. The Brother Visitor Roderich (Anton Zierl), threatened with imprisonment, remained at Knutvil in Switzerland. His successor was interrogated for 7 hours one day in 1938. Finally, in 1940, the Brothers were informed by the Procurator General, in Berlin, that they would not be prosecuted.

In the meantime, the authorities tried to find material in order to prosecute members of the clergy and religious on charges of immorality. With this in mind, the Gestapo was

particularly interested to know why former Brothers had left or had been sent away, and they interrogated pupils and teachers individually in schools run by the Brothers. If, generally speaking, pupils and teachers spoke favourably of the Brothers, some gave the investigators the information they were looking for. A Brother from Meersburg and one from Bitburg were arrested, as well as several former Brothers. The first was condemned to two years in prison, despite the fact he always insisted he was the victim of false testimony; and in the case of the second, after 15 months of preventive detention, his case was dismissed. Some former Brothers were convicted.

Finally, the public authorities turned their attention directly to schools run by religious. Without being given any reason, the Brothers were obliged to close their schools. The real reason, as Brother Kilian indicated, was that religious were judged incapable of educating young people in conformity with Nazi doctrine. And so, schools closed down one after the other. Where possible, the Brothers stayed where they were.

As the same Brother wrote to the Superiors on January 11th 1937 from Knutvil in Switzerland,

“This is a Kulturkampf which is much worse than that of Bismarck in the last century. The State is everything, the Church is nothing...Despite all this, we must stay where we are...We have the full support of the parents of our pupils” (GA NB 111-1/9).

As for Brother Assistant Athanase Émile, in his report on the Institute in central Europe, dated January 1st 1939, and drawn up at the request of Pope Pius XII, he writes,

“What we have here is not a bloody, but a clever persecution intended to make thousands of children give up their faith, and to deprive them of a Christian education...The new ideal, which seeks to make the State the sole teacher of youth, has suppressed any organisation which leaves a strong Christian imprint on German youth” (GA NNB 111-1/10).

In Austria, as we can read in the short work entitled 100 Jahre - Schulbruder in Osterreich, ‘March 11th 1938 is a black day in the history of Austria. An anti-Christian view of the world became a political reality...The new autocratic State put in place institutions fundamentally anti-clerical in their approach to education, secular culture and science’ (p. 53). And so, on July 19th of that same year, the right to teach in private educational establishments was suppressed, the motive given being that members of the clergy or of religious congregations were considered to be unsuitable to educate young people. In the summer of 1938, all the establishments of the Brothers of the Christian

Schools in Austria were closed, and only two small communities continued to function in hiding.

In the final analysis, while no Brothers as such were put to death in Germany or Austria, there is no doubt that the members of the Institute there as a whole suffered persecution, whether they were forced to leave the country or survive in particularly difficult conditions. One can also suppose that their status as religious, or their apostolic zeal, had a bearing on the fact that Brothers in various countries were sent to concentration camps by the Nazis, even if the reason for their condemnation may have been some form of 'resistance'.

Poland

Issue no. 244 of the *Bulletin of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools*, dated 1988, reports that three Brothers were put to death by the Germans in Poland. An account of the death of two of these Brothers (GA NB 500) gives the impression that it was not, or at least not solely, because they were religious that these Brothers were killed. In any case, some civilians were killed at the same time. This episode could be classified rather as yet another an act of violence committed by the Nazis in their attempt to destroy the Polish Nation, an act which, in this country, was necessarily also an attack on the Catholic Church.

On the other hand, when the Germans recaptured Lwow (now Lviv in the Ukraine) from the Soviet army, it would seem that when Brother Wojciech Marjan (Piotr Frocha) was arrested by the Nazis and sent to the Majdanek concentration camp near Lublin, it was because he was a religious. According to a witness, this Brother was put to death because he tried to defend another prisoner who was being mistreated, and deserves therefore to be considered as a "martyr of charity" like Fr Kolbe.

Philippines

An article in the same *Bulletin of the Institute*, entitled "Sixteen Brothers executed in De La Salle College in Manila on February 12th 1945", describes the circumstances of the death of these Brothers, and gives their names and their date of birth. In this article, the Brothers are considered to be "martyrs".

The circumstances of these deaths will be given later. It is sufficient to say at this point that on February 12th 1945 some Brothers at De La Salle College, Manila, together with some civilians who had taken refuge there, were massacred by Japanese soldiers who

occupied a part of the buildings of this establishment. We include this event in this supplement because there is a need to clarify the exact number of Brothers massacred, and more importantly, to assess to what extent persecution of a religious nature was a factor in their death.

The Brothers massacred in Manila

According to different versions of what happened, either 16 or 17 Brothers were massacred in Manila. One document from the Philippines shows a plaque bearing the names of the Brothers put to death in Manila in February 1945. There are 16 names. In the same way, the list given in the *Bulletin of the Institute* carries 16 names. If the number 17 is sometimes mentioned, it is probably because, in fact, it was 17 Brothers who suffered at the hands of the Japanese soldiers, but one of them survived despite his wounds. Also, when we speak of the 16 Brothers massacred, we need to make a distinction in the case of the Brother Director Egbert Xavier (William Kelly). He was arrested on February 3rd and was certainly executed by the Japanese who suspected him of supporting the guerilla forces. His body has never been found. So, it was 15 Brothers, together with 25 civilians, that were killed on February 12th 1945 at Manila at De La Salle College.

Of the 15 Brothers put to death on February 12th 1945, 12 were German, and the 3 others were Irish, Czech and Hungarian respectively. When the massacre began, one of the Brothers told the Japanese soldiers in their own language that several Brothers were German. So it was not because the Brothers belonged to an enemy nation that they were killed, given that Japan and Germany were allies. On the other hand, all the Brothers were Europeans. What the Japanese thought of Europeans is clearly indicated by one of the answers an officer made to the observations of the Brother Director, when Japanese troops first took over the buildings:

“We do not consider the Philippines as conquered territory. We are aiding it to realize its own destiny in regard to the realm of Great East Asia. The Orient is to be administered by Orientals, and the Japanese are working to prevent its violation by other nationals. The Japanese are trying to help the Philippines and East Asia at great cost to themselves. It is for this reason they are sacrificing the lives of hundreds of thousands of their own men” (Archives of the District of the Philippines: History of the House 1911-1946).

While this might explain the attitude of the Japanese soldiers towards the Brothers, it cannot explain why they massacred the Filipino civilians.

The sharing of accommodation by Brothers and successive Japanese detachments from 1941 to 1945 was never easy, and relations became even more tense when the recapture of the Philippines began and American troops advanced on Manila. Moreover, at this point, the Japanese commander of the detachment ordered the Brother Director to evacuate the part of the buildings occupied by the Brothers and the civilians. Brother Egbert objected. There is no doubt that, generally speaking, there was a confrontation between two philosophies and two value systems which were radically different, and this could have affected the behaviour of the soldiers towards the Brothers. On the other hand, there is no proof that the massacre carried out in February 1945 was religiously motivated, and even less, that it was the culminating point of a process of religious persecution, even if the officer quoted earlier boasted that,

“Japan has been selected by Divine Providence to lead the Asiatics to permanent peace among themselves and to world peace.”

As will be explained later, it would seem the massacre was rather a reaction of an army at bay. This detracts nothing from the merit of the Brothers who sealed, by sacrificing their lives, the missionary commitment which had led them to leave their own country in order to bear the Gospel message to far-off lands.

Conclusion

What has been said shows that it is not easy to identify what constitutes religious persecution, since situations differ so much, and the religious element is linked so much to other aspects of a different nature. But our attempts at discernment have been useful as they have led us to distinguish between what happened to the Brothers in Mexico, Spain and Germany-Austria, and what befell the Brothers in Poland and the Philippines. However, as we draw our conclusions, we feel it serves no purpose to dwell on this aspect of the question. What is more important, we feel, is to see the effect this persecution had, individually and collectively, on the Brothers who considered themselves to be, and who were persecuted.

First of all, this was a period of trial which, in many cases, proved fruitful, in the sense that the Brothers were obliged to surpass themselves in order to face up to the threats hanging over them, and especially when their life was in danger. And so, we read in *Sembraron con amor* that the Brothers who “spent weeks and months in all kinds of prisons...maintained a remarkable level of fervour” (p. 553). The more insidious form of persecution endured by the Brothers in Germany and Austria led them to consolidate

their inner strength so as not to allow themselves to be shaken in their beliefs. The threats weighing on the Brothers in Mexico made them daring in pursuing their apostolate.

On the other hand, others who are more fragile or who have lost courage can give up when faced with persecution. This probably explains the relatively large number of Brothers in Spain and Austria who left the Institute in 1939. Regarding Germany, a note dated 1946 outlining the situation of the District gives the impression that quite a large number of young Brothers, but also some perpetually professed Brothers, were unable to survive the two-fold ordeal of the war and persecution (GA NB 111-1/11).

For those who survive a persecution, its end is a time to make a new start. This probably explains why the Institute in Spain quickly regained its strength. The same can be said of Mexico, including the period during which the Brothers were obliged to operate secretly. On the other hand, it seems that, in the case of Germany and Austria, the two-fold trial endured by the Brothers was too devastating to enable the Institute to re-establish itself in any real way.

However, the satisfaction of having survived hostile onslaughts can have a negative side-effect: a return to the past as if nothing had happened, and the lack of questioning of what had gone on. In the light of this, we can perhaps understand the two-fold question asked in *Sembraron con amor* regarding an attitude which could well have been that of the Church and of the Institute in Spain after the Civil War:

‘When the Church finds it has so much freedom to pursue its apostolic work, will it take advantage of its freedom to serve the Gospel better, or instead, to strengthen its prestige, its influence and its role in society? But the Institute of the Brothers is also the Church, and it is a question it also has to face’ (p. 591).

As far as the Church in Spain is concerned, it has to be said, that the attitude it has adopted is rather the second than the first. Can it be said that the Institute has not been tempted to follow suit, even though its restoration on the institutional level has not been without its difficulties, and that, already, the ecclesiastical hierarchy has wanted to restrict the Brothers to a secondary role?

As for the Brothers in Germany and Austria, their efforts to build on the ruins resulting from the Nazi persecution and the war cannot be interpreted in any way as an attempt to restore lost influence. Regarding the Brothers in Mexico, they have sought to find an adequate response to the situation imposed upon them. But for all that, in both cases, have not the Brothers restricted themselves too much to reproducing the model they knew before the trial that affected them?

Chapter 2 - THE INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK (1928-1946)

Introduction

While world events affected the Institute the world over, its internal organisation continued to function normally. This can be seen from two facts in particular: the extensive replacement of personnel at the head of the Institute; and its maintenance of continuity with the past in the way it functioned.

Significant facts affecting the Institute as a whole can serve as points of reference for the period under consideration. The table below places them in the context of the key-events of the same period.

Historical landmarks

| Institute facts | World context |
|--|---|
| General Chapter: election of Br. Adrien | 1928 |
| | 1929 Beginning of the world economic crisis |
| Arrival of the Brothers in Japan | 1932 |
| | 1933 Hitler comes to power in Germany |
| General Chapter: election of Br. Junien Victor | 1934 |
| Persecution in Spain; Transfer of Generalate to Rome | 1936 |
| Transfer of SJB relics to Rome | 1937 |
| | 1938 Annexation of Austria by Germany |
| | 1939 Beginning of 2 nd World War |
| Appointment of Br. Arèse Casimir as Vicar General | 1940 |
| | 1941 Japan declares war on USA |
| | 1945 End of war |
| General Chapter: election of Br. Athanase Émile | 1946 |

Renewal of personnel at the head of the Institute

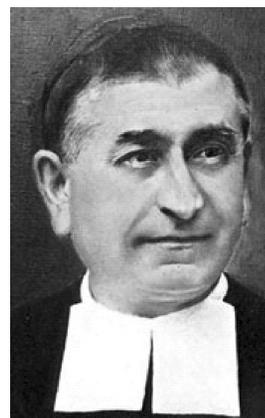
One of the characteristics of this period was the relatively rapid change of personnel at the head of the Institute. In a period of 18 years, there were 3 successive Superior Generals, and 13 new Assistants were chosen.

– Superior Generals

Brother Adrien

Brother Allais Charles having died on May 24th 1928, a circular dated June 15th announced that, owing to the proximity of the summer holidays and of the annual retreats, the holding of the General Chapter had had to be postponed for longer than the three months allowed by the Rule of Government. A dispensation had been given by the Holy See, and the Chapter would open on November 7th.

During the morning session of Sunday November 11th, the Chapter proceeded with the election of the new Superior General. With 80 of the 100 votes cast in favour of Brother Adrien, he was duly declared elected.



Brother of Brother Allais Charles, Adrien Petiot was born in Bas en Basset (Haute Loire) on February 8th 1867, and was baptised the same day. He was 10 years old when his father died. In 1879, his brother took him to the junior novitiate in Paris. On August 31st 1882, he began his postulancy and received the habit on the following October 1st. At the end of his novitiate, he was sent to the junior novitiate as assistant teacher. In June 1884, he joined his brother at St Nicolas in Paris. He progressively graduated to teach the higher classes while at the same time cultivating his interest in literary studies. In 1895, he made his perpetual profession. In September 1898, he was appointed Director of the Junior Novitiate in Paris. In 1906, after presiding over the Great Exercises, he received an obedience to be Sub-Director of the Passy Froyennes boarding school on the Belgian frontier where, subsequently, he became Pro-Director. In August 1912, he was appointed Visitor of the District of Paris, where many of the Brothers had kept schools running by becoming “secularised”. As a delegate to the 1913 General Chapter, he was elected Assistant and found himself responsible for the Districts of Paris and Le Puy, as well as for those of the Antilles and Mexico.

The new Superior communicated the results of the Chapter to the Institute by a circular dated January 6th 1929 (Circ. 266). He began the circular by pointing out his limitations regarding the exercise of his functions, but he added, “Our Institute having made us what we are, is it not just that we should give ourselves to it without reserve and with a holy joy?” While Brother Adrien did not share all the qualities his brother had, he proved himself equally capable of heading the Institute. ‘The intelligence of the Superior, multiplied tenfold by his relentless work, went to the heart of things... His sound judgment made him prefer to steer a middle course and oppose hasty and exaggerated opinions’ (Notice nécrologique, 158). Also, “In addition to his remarkable intellect, his heart was very much in the right place” (id. P. 161).

By nature, Brother Adrien was more at home in the office: he did not set about visiting systematically certain parts of the Institute as Brother Allais Charles had done. On the other hand, he insisted on implementing one of the wishes of the 1928 Chapter by ensuring that Brother Assistants visited their far-off Districts once every 5 or 6 years.

One characteristic of Brother Adrien’s time as Superior was the importance he attached to his visits to Rome. When he went there for the first time, in July 1929, he stopped at a number of houses in France and Italy. In Rome, he met Cardinal Merry del Val, the new Protector of the Institute, who took a particular interest in a scheme organised for young people by the Brothers’ school in Trastevere. When the Superior was received in audience by Pope Pius XI, he congratulated the Holy Father on the golden anniversary of his priesthood, and on the Lateran Treaty which had recently been signed with the Italian government. On another visit he made in October 1933, he took the opportunity to thank the Sovereign Pontiff for the encyclical on education he had just written. The Pope was particularly interested in countries in which congregations were forbidden to teach. In this connection, he agreed the Brothers should continue their apostolate there, even if it meant wearing civilian dress. During this visit, the Superior went to see also Cardinal Pacelli, the Secretary of State, who had agreed to take on the role of Cardinal Protector of the Institute.

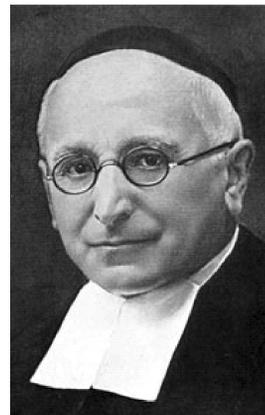
The Sacred Congregation for Religious had asked the 1928 General Chapter to transfer the Generalate to Rome. On March 7th 1929, the Regime Council decided that the new premises would house not only the Regime, but also the Secretary General’s office, a missionary junior novitiate and novitiate, and supporting services for the various groups located there. In the light of this, it was planned to purchase quite a large property in or near Rome (Register 3, 285). On December 3rd 1931, the Council confirmed this project but thought its implementation should be postponed until better times (Reg. 4, 93).

According to the obituary of Brother Adrien, he first felt the effects of an illness which caused him concern, in 1932. In 1934, the illness grew worse, and he was admitted to a clinic in Lille. He died there on March 2nd. He was 68 years old and had been Superior of the Institute for almost five and a half years.

– *Brother Junien Victor*

Following the death of Brother Adrien, the Brother Assistants sent a circular dated March 13th 1934, convoking a General Chapter for June 13th. On Sunday June 17th, the Chapter proceeded with the election of a new Superior. Brother Assistant Junien Victor obtained 85 votes and was declared elected.

Auguste Détharré was born at Bayonne on August 19th 1864. Having lost his mother before he was able to know her, he was initially brought up by his elder sister. At the age of 7, he was admitted to one of the schools run by the Brothers in his home town. When his father died also, he was entrusted to the care of an aunt and her husband. When he informed his uncle that he wanted to join the Brothers, he was refused permission until January 1881. At this point, he entered the junior novitiate at Talence near Bordeaux and, on April 16th of the same year, he was admitted to the novitiate in the same house. On August 21st he received the habit. At the end of the novitiate, he was sent to teach at the scholasticate at Talence. When, in 1885, a house was built at Mauléon for the District of Bayonne, Brother Junien Victor went there with 9 scholastics from this District as their maths and science teacher. In 1892, he made his perpetual profession. In 1895, he was appointed Director of the junior novitiate at Mauléon and, in 1903, of the novitiate and scholasticate. Given the threats hanging over the Institute, the Superiors had bought a property at Zarauz in Spain and, in July 1904, all the formation groups at Mauléon were transferred there. Brother Junien Victor was put in charge of them all. In 1919, he was appointed Visitor of the District of Bayonne. At the 1923 Chapter, he was elected Assistant, and put in charge of various French Districts to which, in 1933, was added that of Indochina. It was during his visit to this District at the end of that year that he learned of the death of Brother Adrien.



In order to fulfil properly all the various responsibilities entrusted to him, Brother Junien Victor had adopted a strict timetable of personal work. As Superior, he contin-

ued to observe this timetable. His understanding of the role of a Superior was such that he rarely left the Generalate. He undertook no long journeys, except to go to Rome, as in November 1934. According to his obituary, he personally read all the reddition letters sent by the Brothers before passing them on to the Assistants responsible for answering them; and he read through and annotated all the reports on visits. His correspondence reveals in particular the great importance he attached to a knowledge of the holy Founder, and his great interest in the history of the Institute, which was beginning to come under the scrutiny of Georges Rigault. His support for the missions should be noted also.

During the first years of his mandate as Superior General, the Generalate was transferred to Rome in 1936, and in 1937, after a triumphal welcome in Italy, the relics of Saint John Baptist de La Salle were placed in the chapel of the new headquarters of the Institute. The Superior was in Paris for medical reasons when, in May 1940, the Germans invaded Holland, Belgium and then France. He made his way to Mauléon where he was joined by several Assistants. This little town, which was in a part of France not occupied by the German troops, became in this way the temporary headquarters of the Institute.

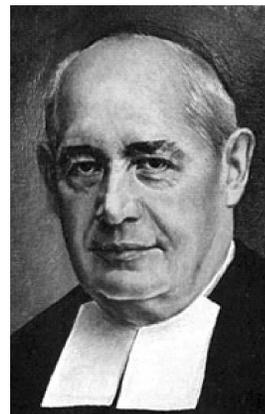
The attitude of the Superior in the face of such a major event as the war is revealed in particular in a circular dated January 18th 1940, where he says to the Brothers, "My very dear Brothers, may you have the happiness of living a more intense life of faith in imitation of our holy Founder who saw everything in God and God in everything... Today, more than ever, let us try to see events and things from the point of view of Providence which disposes all things with due weight and measure..." (Circ. 307, 8). Looking back on the year that had just ended, he outlined the consequences for the Brothers of the entry of various countries into the war. Speaking of the Generalate, he noted that fewer than half of the Brothers expected had come to the second novitiate.

In his circular dated January 1st 1940, Brother Junien Victor mentioned that at the end of 1938, he had had to spend some time in the community at Le Rancher, near Le Mans, for reasons of health. During the course of 1939, he had been obliged to make a similar stay in a house of formation of the District of Rome at Torre del Greco, near Naples. From July 1940, the health of the Superior deteriorated. He died on October 15th 1940. Provisionally interred at Mauléon, his body was transferred to Athis Mons, near Paris, on November 22nd 1940.

– *Brother Arèse Casimir*

As circumstances prevented the holding of a General Chapter, the Holy See appointed, by a rescript dated December 11th 1940, a Vicar General as head of the Institute, in the person of the oldest of the Assistants, Brother Arèse Casimir.

Brother Arèse-Casimir. Born on December 13th 1862 at Château Thierry (Marne), Valentin Bression attended a local municipal school run by the Brothers from a very early age. At the age of 14, he entered the recently opened junior novitiate at Bar le Duc (Meuse). He made his novitiate at Thillois, near Rheims, where Brother Arnould was Director, receiving the habit on June 8th 1878. Having completed his one year of formation, he was sent to the boarding school on the rue de Venise, at Rheims. He spent 25 years there, graduating from the lower to the more senior classes and progressively taking on more responsibilities. In 1896, he was appointed Director. When the boarding school was closed by decree on July 9th 1904, Brother Arèse transferred it to Momignies, Belgium, on the Franco-Belgian border. On January 1st 1919, he was appointed Director of the Arts and Crafts school at Erquelines, likewise on the Belgian frontier. In 1920, to his responsibility of Director was added that of Visitor, and in the December of that year he became Assistant. He was given responsibility for 7 French Districts which, apart from one, had many “secularised” Brothers (see LS 11, 140 ff). He was given responsibility also for the District of Indo-China. He had been Assistant for 20 years when he was appointed Vicar General.



The Vicar General, in his turn, made Mauléon his residence. In a circular dated January 12th 1941, he announced his appointment to the Brothers. In November of the same year, he was able to go to Rome where he stayed until February 1942. He went to Belgium also and, in October, he had the possibility of going to Spain. When the German army extended its occupation to the whole of France in that same year, contact with the Brothers in certain countries became very difficult and sometimes impossible.

In the circular he wrote to all the Brothers at the beginning of each year, even if some could not receive a copy, Brother Arèse Casimir had a special thought for all those who suffered because of the war, and he shared with them news he received from various countries. He reflected also on events which, in his view, were above all the result of “laicism” which had spread throughout the world. With their freedom of movement

severely restricted, the Superiors at Mauléon still continued to administer the Institute, preparing also for the next General Chapter and for the revision of the Rules which had been requested by the last Chapter.

The end of the war in Europe marked by the armistice signed on May 8th 1945, allowed the Regime to regroup and to re-establish contact with the rest of the Institute, with the exception of some countries in the Far East. A circular dated October 8th 1945 announced the convocation of a General Chapter and called for the election of delegates. In November, two Assistants were sent to Rome to oversee the work of putting the generalate in order. In his circular at the beginning of 1946, the Vicar General announced that Brothers, who had been cut off for five years, were once again able to communicate with the Superiors. He spoke of the Brothers who in various ways had been victims of the war. He also thanked those who had sent help to their fellow Brothers in other countries, as soon as this had become possible. The Superiors left Mauléon on April 12th, and the General Chapter opened on May 15th 1946. For the Institute, it marked the end of a particularly stormy period.

– Brother Assistants

The two General Chapters and several electoral commissions were responsible for a relatively extensive turnover of Brother Assistants, and for a lowering of their average age, as several of those elected were in their 50s.

Brother Assistants elected from 1928 to 1938

| Religious name | Secular name | D.o.B. | Country | Date elected |
|---------------------|----------------------|--------|----------------|--------------------------------|
| Gordien-Désiré | Aubouard François | 1879 | France | November 12 th 1928 |
| Athanase-Émile | Ritiman Louis | 1880 | France | November 12 th 1928 |
| Pedro Luis | Barranco Ricardo | 1873 | Spain | November 12 th 1928 |
| Nivard-Joseph | Liotier Joseph | 1877 | France | November 12 th 1928 |
| Dionysius van Jezus | De Schepper Alphonse | 1882 | Belgium | October 13 th 1932 |
| Francesco di Maria | Tranquilli Francesco | 1878 | Italy | June 18 th 1934 |
| Cosme-Dominique | Rannou Alain | 1885 | France | June 18 th 1934 |
| Hyacinth Maria | Brückner Valentin | 1878 | Austria | October 28 th 1934 |
| Romuald Hosea | Meyer Joseph | 1872 | Alsace (Germ.) | June 25 th 1936 |
| Ariste-Léonce | Guillin Gabriel | 1875 | France | November 14 th 1937 |
| Adolphe-Marie | Singeot Louis | 1888 | France | November 14 th 1937 |
| Philothée-Jean | Jourde J-B. | 1886 | France | November 14 th 1937 |
| Zacharias | Marquion Adrien | 1889 | France | May 2 nd 1938* |

Continuity in the way the Institute functioned

Despite all that happened during this period, little was changed in the way the Institute properly so-called functioned. It continued to be a highly centralised body, from which emanated a driving force which filtered down to the different levels represented by.

– General Chapters

In 1928, the 20 ex officio members were joined by 80 Brothers elected by the various Districts. When capitulants gathered at the Generalate at Lembecq on June 13th 1934, 22 of them were ex officio members, and 87 were elected.

During these two Chapters, as was usual, notes from the Brothers, arranged according to topics, were first examined by Commissions. The reports drawn up by these Commissions, and the propositions they formulated served as a basis for discussion by the General Assembly which subsequently voted on them. Often the same questions featured in both Chapters. For example:

– Concerning recruitment. In 1928, it was said that “recruitment of orphans and children entrusted to guardians should normally be avoided”; and that care should be taken not to recruit too low down the social scale. In 1934, the recommendation was that recruitment should take place as far as possible in classes and pious associations, and in particular in the senior classes where there were boarders.

– Concerning formation. In 1928, a recommendation was made to allow junior novices spend holidays at home, and to set up senior scholasticates. In 1934, it was generally thought desirable for the age of admission to the novitiate to be raised, and the duration of the scholasticate to be at least 2 years.

– To ensure greater perseverance among Brothers, the desire was expressed in 1928 that “the dearth of vocations having stopped, we should employ only religious staff as soon a possible”; and that overworking should be avoided as it was “the cause of discouragement and a loss of vocations”. In 1934, capitulants were warned of the danger resulting from the presence of lay staff, and the remedy proposed was to train the latter in Institute training colleges.

– Regarding the missions, in 1928, there was an appeal “to intensify missionary activity in the Institute”. In 1934, the wish was expressed to open an English-language missionary formation centre.

– Regarding the Christian formation of pupils, in 1928, it was said that pupils should be made to follow Mass in a more liturgical way. In 1934, a recommendation was made that pupils should be encouraged to join pious associations and Catholic Action groups, but that the running of these groups by Brothers should not damage their religious life or lead to excessive contact with the world.

Some other more specific points were stressed by one or other of the Chapters:

– In 1928, concerning general administration, it was requested that District Councils be held more regularly.

– In 1934, regarding the Rules, the commission rejected on its own initiative two motions proposing the publication of a history of the Common Rules, and of an authentic interpretation of these Rules. Their action was supported by the Chapter.

– Regarding catechism examinations, it was proposed that programmes should be rewritten, and that they should lead to 5 examinations at an intermediate level, and 4 series of 3 examinations each at an advanced level.

– Regarding educational establishments, the question of gratuity was raised, and the fear expressed of a departure from the norm.

– Regarding the religious life of the Brothers, the commission expressed its disapproval of a score of notes asking for a reduction in religious exercises and for a later time for rising, especially as the notes seemed to be the result of a joint effort.

Motions retained by the Chapters were voted on at the end. In 1928, 62 were adopted, and in 1934, 43. In the latter year, the motion was passed to extend the length of the scholasticate to at least 2 years. As this entailed a change in the Rules, it was enshrined in a “decree”. Another motion concerned the dress of the Brothers, specifically, the “stockings” worn by them!

– **The “Regime” of the Institute**

In the Institute, the age-old term “Regime” was used to designate the group formed by the Brother Superior General and his Assistants. The role of the Brother Assistants was to be the Superior General’s councillors. The “Regime Council” met regularly, including during the war, even if the number of Assistants was reduced. During this period, a special register was even used (GA EG 430-4b). As before, it referred only to administrative matters.

Each of the Assistants was in charge of a certain number of Districts, which did not constitute a fixed administrative unit, as their allocation to Assistants could be changed. The result of this allocation of Districts to Assistants was that, on the one hand, the latter tended to interfere too much in the running of these Districts and, on the other, they lacked a certain sense of the universal character of the Institute and of its diversity. The experience acquired by the Brother Assistants when they themselves were Visitors is reflected in the advice they gave those who depended on them. But it is noticeable that certain Assistants who had been given other responsibilities previously, played a more significant role in the Regime. This was the case, for example, of Brother Gordien Désiré, who had special responsibility for the Near East, and had been Secretary General; of Brother Romuald Hosea, responsible for Canada, where he had lived, and who had been Visitor General; and of Brother Zacharias, who also had been Visitor General. It was especially true of Brother Athanase Émile, who had previously been Director of the Second Novitiate, who had responsibility for the Districts of central Europe during the Nazi period, and responsibility also for several Latin American Districts. The war led some Brother Assistants who were cut off from the centre of the Institute to assume important roles. For example, Brother Abban Philip, Assistant for the United States, received special powers to represent the Vicar General in his dealings with all American Districts.

– Districts

Districts and their Visitors continued to play an essential role in the organisation of the Institute. These Districts were not “Provinces” in the canonical sense of the word, but they served the same purpose for the Institute, while allowing the Institute greater flexibility regarding their establishment or suppression. In 1928, there were 60 Districts. By 1939, the Districts of Bilbao, Congo and Peru-Bolivia had been added to this number, but those of Saint-Étienne and Grenoble had become once again part of the Lyons District. In 1945, the District of Holland was created. Districts varied in size. For example, in 1939, there were 785 and 649 Brothers respectively in the Districts North Belgium and South Belgium; and 529 in the District of Montreal. There were 89 Brothers in the District of Colombo, 89 in that of the Congo, and 98 in the District of Peru-Bolivia.

Each Brother Visitor had to administer a part of the Institute called a District. This involved constant contact regarding all matters relating to its administration with a Brother Assistant who likewise had responsibility for the District. This arrangement made for a vast amount of correspondence between the two.

As the title implies, the Brother Visitor had the responsibility of making “canonical visits” to the communities entrusted to his care. He spent much of his time making these visits, especially if there were many communities, even if he had the help of one or several auxiliary Visitors; or if, because of the distances separating communities, he had to undertake long journeys, sometimes by very rudimentary forms of transport. On completing these visits, the Visitor had to draw up reports giving his instructions to the communities, and informing the Superiors regarding how they were run.

All in all, the Brother Visitor had an essential role to play in relation to the Brothers, with whom he needed to establish a personal relationship. In this way, he became for the Brothers someone they could confide in, and who could guide them in their spiritual and apostolic life. It was also the role of the Brother Visitor to move Brothers from one community to another, either for their own good, or very often, because their services were required in another school. On the other hand, it was the Brother Superior who appointed Brother Directors, at the suggestion of the Brother Visitor and Brother Assistant.

The essential role played by Brother Visitors explains the care taken by Brother Assistants and, in the last resort, by the Superior General, to choose them wisely. In many Districts, there was an ample supply of candidates to choose from, in particular, from among the Directors of large schools or houses of formation. This was not always the case, however, especially in Districts with few Brothers, as in certain missionary countries.

While in long-established Districts, Brother Visitors were natives of the country in which they lived, in missionary countries, this was still not the case. In the same way, most of the Brother Visitors in Latin America were still of French nationality. Certain Visitors remained a long time in their post. This no doubt was a sign of confidence on the part of Superiors, but it could also reflect the difficulty of finding a successor. An example of this is Brother Marius James (James Byrne) in Penang, who, with an interruption of 4 years, was Visitor from 1912 to 1946.

– Communities

From the very outset, the Institute was not seen as a federation of communities. Communities were so many sub-divisions of the whole constituted by the Institute. Their number varied according to that of the Brothers, but it depended greatly also on decisions taken by the Superiors because of circumstances. This was the case in particu-

lar during the period under consideration, during which the number of communities, numbering 1,262 in 1929, first increased slightly then fell by 78 in 1936 - especially because of the situation in Spain - then rose again to 1,266 in 1939, while the number of the Brothers rose from 13,114 to 14,415, with a slight fall in 1936.

Communities varied greatly in size. For example, the Froyennes boarding school numbered 88 Brothers in 1934, whereas elsewhere, many communities had 5, 4 or 3 Brothers. The way these communities functioned differed little from place to place. For example, Brothers throughout the Institute rose at 4.30 am. Where variations in the timetable were introduced, these had to be included in a customary approved by the Superiors.

In the Institute, Brothers put in charge of communities had always been called Directors, and their role was considered to be particularly important. Directors had to ensure not only that the community led a regular life, but also that the establishment, or sometimes establishments depending on it were satisfactorily run. In the final analysis, as this depended to a large extent on the Brothers put in their charge, it was important for Brother Directors to win the confidence of their subordinates, and to manage to train them as teachers by their exhortations, but even more by their example. This was particularly true when a community had one or several beginners. For these reasons, the choice of Directors was one of the main concerns of Brother Visitors and Assistants who had to put forward names to the Superior General. It was not always easy to find Brothers who answered the specific needs of communities as well as of a variety of establishments. While some proved to be exceptionally good at their job, others were less so, unable to cope with the volume of work that faced them.

The Brothers in community were, of course, the most important component of the Institute. All its various structures existed only because of them. The task of Superiors was to help them remain faithful to their religious commitment and fulfil their apostolic duties with great zeal. The danger of this approach was that it encouraged a certain degree of passivity among the Brothers, in the sense that they had hardly any encouragement to use their initiative, or to become personally involved. What happened in practice? We shall attempt to answer this question in the supplement that follows this chapter.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we spoke first of changes in personnel. It is hard not to notice the relative speed with which these changes occurred. After the generalate of Brother Allais

Charles, which had lasted only 5 years, that of Brother Adrien ended after 5 and a half years, and that of Brother Junien Victor after 6 and a half years. Appointed Vicar General because of the current situation, Brother Arèse Casimir remained at his post a little more than 5 years. As a result, none of them was able to pursue a policy for a sufficiently long time. As far as the Brother Assistants were concerned, as in previous periods, some remained at their post for a long time, but it became necessary to replace several, for reasons of health or death, before their mandate expired.

This rapid turnover of personnel was not incompatible, however, with continuity in the functioning of the Institute, as we also noted. This was due to the fact that the three successive Superiors were born and formed before the end of the 19th century, and each one took office at a fairly advanced age: Brother Adrien was 61, Brother Junien Victor 70, and Brother Arèse Casimir 78. In the same way, all the Brother Assistants appointed between 1928 and 1938 were born, and most of them formed, before 1904. What we have said of the Brother Assistants was true also of the members of the General Chapters, and even of some Visitors.

This explains to a great extent, as became evident in the second part of this chapter, why, by comparison with the last part of the 19th century, nothing really changed during this period in the running of the Institute. In fact, at the various levels of the Institute, the tendency was to maintain what had been done before. There were some, however, who had posts of responsibility in the Institute, especially towards the end of this period, who proved to be more aware than others of the changes that the war, in particular, was bringing about in the world or even in the Institute; as well as of the way the Church was evolving during the period under consideration. But their awareness had little effect outside their area of jurisdiction. For example, a case in point was Brother Assistant Zacharias. Others, to restrict ourselves to France, were Visitors such as Brother Armel Félix (Pierre Forfer) in the District of Rheims, Charles (Bruno Prat) in the District of Le Puy, Clodoald (Louis Bengloan) in the District of Quimper, and Cyprien Pierre (Germain Vidal) in the District of Moulins.

2 - *THE INTERNAL LIFE OF THE INSTITUTE*

In the preceding chapter we saw various aspects of the way the Institute functioned. In this supplement to the chapter, we should like to examine what actually went on within the 'institutional framework' we outlined.

This can be seen from the means used by the Superiors to lead and inspire the Brothers, and from the efforts made by the latter to live their lives in accordance with what was asked of them.

Leadership of the Institute

One of the concerns of the various Superiors of the Institute was to stimulate the Brothers to live their religious life as best they could, and fulfil their apostolic mission. To achieve this, they had a number of means at their disposal which can be called 'classic'. What use did they make of them in the period under consideration? We shall attempt to answer this question first, and then go on to see what guidelines were given by the use of these means.

– Means

A circular dated October 7th 1932, entitled "The choice and formation of Brother Directors", states that the means available for the training of Directors were "individual means, such as correspondence and visits, and collective means, such as annual retreats, recollections, special retreats and, where it is not possible to send them all to the second novitiate, the Great Exercises for Brother Directors" (Circ. 276 b, 28 & ff). In reality, these means were intended for all the Brothers. The term *visits* clearly applies to those Brother Visitors had to make every year to communities, or to those Brother Assistants made more exceptionally. The *correspondence* mentioned clearly refers to the letters Brother Directors had to write to the Superior General once a month, and other Brothers every two months. This usage was maintained in the 1901 Rule, but in practice, its frequency had been reduced to once a year. (Cf. *Notice* Br. Romuald Hosea, 46).

Annual retreats were of special concern to the Institute. These were organised in various Districts and were normally presided over by the Brother Assistant responsible for these Districts. Superior Generals reserved a certain number of them for themselves, but Brother Adrien and Brother Junien Victor did so less frequently than their predecessors. Retreats were very 'directive' in their approach: sermons by the preacher and talks by the

retreat president played an important role; participants were given material for spiritual reading. *Special retreats* or the *Great Exercises*, referred to in connection with the Brother Directors, continued to be organised in the form of 20 and 30-day retreats, preceding perpetual profession. As for the *Second Novitiate*, this lasted 9 months and was attended by Brothers from a variety of countries, destined usually for posts of responsibility. The input, which normally took the form of talks, was intended to establish a certain degree of uniformity in the Institute.

Another means at the disposal of the Superiors was the publication of new editions of old texts, especially those of the holy Founder, or of new works. This does not seem to have happened in the days of Brother Adrien and Junien Victor. As for the years when Brother Arèse Casimir was Vicar General, the current situation was hardly conducive to the publication of these texts. For example, although the 1934 Chapter had asked for “the series of books of meditations to be extended” (Circ. 283, 56), no action seems to have been taken. While the *Meditations for Sundays and Feasts* of St John Baptist de La Salle were available in a 1922 edition, for other days, the Subjects for Meditation composed by Brother Philippe were still in use, and were beginning to date.

As had been the case for a long time, circulars were the principal means Superior Generals used to reach all the Brothers. The Superiors in office between 1928 and 1946 did not write many circulars, but more often than not, developed their themes at some length. Each of them added a personal touch. Brother Adrien, given his background, treated all questions relating to the lives of the Brothers with an equal mastery of his subject. Brother Junien Victor, above all, shared with the Brothers the spiritual experience he had acquired in particular as Director of novices. Brother Arèse Casimir, as he himself admitted, used in his circulars material he had read, and based himself in particular on the teachings of Pius XII.

Some circulars were written in response to particular events. They communicated to the Institute the results of General Chapters in 1928 (Circ. 266) and in 1934 (Circ. 283). Brother Adrien gave an account of his journeys to Rome in April 1929 (Circ. 269) and 1930 (Circ. 280). Brother Junien Victor described the transfer of the relics of the holy Founder to Rome (Circ. 296, dated March 19th 1937). Other circulars treated a variety of topics. Brother Adrien wrote about the causes of beatification of “our holy Brothers” (Circ. 273), and mentioned the causes of Blessed Brother Solomon, the Venerable Brother Benildus, Brothers Mutien Marie, Miguel, Exupérien, Alpert and the Martyrs of the French Revolution. He also said that the causes of Brothers Scubilion, Irénée and Arnould had been provisionally abandoned. Brother Junien Victor wrote a

circular on the “Vows” (Circ. 287), and another on the “New study programmes for the advanced course in catechism” (Circ. 288 & 291).

Circulars served also to bring to the attention of the Brothers the reports submitted to the Superiors following their retreat. In the time of Brother Adrien, a circular already mentioned dealt with the “Choice and formation of Brother Directors” (Circ. 276b, dated October 7th 1932), while another was entitled “Distinction in the religious educator” (Circ. 275, dated November 21st 1931). Brother Junien Victor published a report on Catholic Action (Circ. 297), and another on the catechetical work of the Brothers (Circ. 300).

The Superiors took special care over the circulars they sent on each New Year’s Day to thank the Brothers for the wishes they had sent, and to send their own. Brother Junien Victor would include a “Glance back over the past year”, and Brother Arèse Casimir did the same thing, but at greater length in his “General survey”, to make up for the absence of the Institute Bulletin which could not be published because of the war. In their New Year’s Day circulars, the Superiors liked especially to treat at some length topics they wished the Brothers to think about. At the beginning of his mandate, Brother Adrien used a text Brother Allais Charles, his brother, had prepared (Circ. 267). In the same way, Brother Junien Victor (Circ. 286, dated January 6th 1935) spoke of “devotion to the Passion”, to mark the Jubilee of the Redemption which ended on April 28th of the same year. In 1930, however, Brother Adrien began a series of circulars on the “Commandments of the Society”. His successor continued this series in 1936. In 1943, Brother Arèse Casimir took as his topic what he called “religious renewal”, or other topics related to the Brothers’ mission.

To the circulars of the Superiors of the Institute we can add those of the Brothers Visitors who also sought to inspire the Brothers. Thanks to the advent of copying machines, they sent circulars to the Brothers, in particular to suggest topics to consider during the “recollection” they were invited to make in community at the end of each month.

– Guidelines

The overall aim of the inspirational means used was to support and stimulate the spiritual life of the Brothers. This is very clearly the case where circulars and different types of retreats for the Brothers are concerned. The contents of both are quite similar and point to a common source. What is said in a note regarding talks given by Brother

Adrien, but which can be applied to his writings, indicates what this source was. We read that:

“...when he became a major superior, his topics were inspired more exclusively by ascetical and mystical writers and his own experience. The tone he adopted was the more personal, relaxed and casual tone of profane writers...” (GA EE 284/10).

In the case of Brother Junien Victor, the notes and texts of his talks deposited in the Generalate archives, in which we find a particular insistence on flight from the world, indicate that his teachings were clearly inspired by the same source. If in the case of Brother Arèse Casimir his references were different, the contents were quite similar to those of his predecessors.

The teachings given to the Brothers by these means reflected those which were current in the Church as a whole at that time. These teachings were rather ‘moralising’, that is, intended to encourage a particular way of behaving. Their doctrinal basis was weak. For example, while Jesus Christ was frequently proposed as a model to imitate, there was little attempt to inspire attachment to him as a person, or to the Gospel. These teachings generally took the form of reflections which were developed at length, in a magisterial manner. In the Institute, the authority of the Bull of Approbation, the Rules and Chapter decisions was frequently invoked and, in the same way, when the writings of the holy Founder were concerned, a literal application of what was said was insisted on. In fact, both contents and style reflected what had been current in the 19th and at the beginning of the 20th century. However, a return to ‘Christocentricity’, attested especially by the encyclical *Mystici corporis Christi* of Pius XII in 1943, was beginning to inspire a certain renewal in the official teaching of the Church and even of the Institute.

While the Superiors laid great stress on what could enhance the spiritual life of the Brothers, they did not neglect what concerned their apostolic mission. During retreats, Superiors restated the professional and apostolic obligations of the Brothers. Two of Brother Adrien’s circulars on the “Commandments of the Society” concentrated on the teaching given by the Brothers. As has already been said, particular aspects of the mission of the Brothers were the object of circulars based on reports drawn up by others, and not by Brothers Adrien or Junien Victor. Even if the latter did not write them, these circulars bear witness to the importance they attached to the topics treated. Because of their origin, these texts seemed more practical and more up-to-date in character than those written by the Superiors themselves. We shall treat this topic at greater length later. Brother Arèse Casimir, on the other hand, stressed the mission of the Brothers as

Christian educators when, in 1944, he expounded on a subject to which he seemed to attach great importance, in a circular entitled “Education and state of grace” (Circ. 314), or in 1945, when he returned to the topic of Catholic Action and catechism (Circ. 315).

All in all, the guidelines set out by the Superiors tended to propose the model of a certain kind of Brother, characterised by fidelity to the Rule and to the vows, flight from the world, and by a piety nourished by devotions in vogue in the Church at the time. It was a model characterised also by devotedness to the service of the pupils, and zeal in the fulfilment of their apostolic mission of education, as long as this work did not damage what was considered to be religious life properly so called.

Attitude of the Brothers

What has been said enables us to see in what direction the recommendations of the Superiors tended to channel the Brothers. To what extent did the Brothers follow these guidelines? To tell the truth, it is quite difficult to say on the basis of direct sources, as Brothers rarely expressed their views regarding this topic. *Historiques*, generally speaking, had nothing to say about what the Brothers did in community. While written material left by a number of them give some insight into their personal lives, and extracts from such material are included in some *Notices nécrologiques* or in biographies of certain Brothers, this written material is too sparse to be representative of the Brothers as a whole. The *notices* themselves tended to give a fairly stereotyped image of the Brothers, all the more so as, before being sent out to the Institute as a whole, they were all revised by one and the same editor. However, some *notices* stand out from this widespread uniformity: they are particularly short and give accounts of somewhat obscure lives, or gloss over the mediocrity of others. On the other hand, some longer *notices* highlight some particularly influential figures. But, as in biographies of such Brothers, what is said of them refers above all to their apostolic activity. Despite all these differences, these *notices* are at the same time too numerous and too fragmented to allow us in this work to gain a sufficiently exact idea of how the Brothers lived in the period under consideration here.

We thought it preferable to try to gain an idea of how the Brothers lived in an indirect way, by basing ourselves on the reports Brother Visitors drew up at the end of their annual “canonical visits” to the communities under their jurisdiction. In his work *Les Frères des Écoles chrétiennes au Canada* vol. II, p. 408 ff, Nive Voisine has analysed reports referring to a certain number of communities over the period 1920 to 1939.

To write the report he had to send to the Superior of the Institute - he would leave an extract for the community concerned - the Brother Visitor used a form consisting of four pages. During the first years of the period we are considering here, on page 1 there was a *Questionnaire* concerning basically the life of the Brothers in community, and partly, the way in which they acquitted themselves of their “employment”. On page 2, first of all, under the general heading *Recommendations*, there was a blank space divided into two columns, one of which had the heading *To the community*, and the other, *To the Brother Director*. The greater part of the page was devoted to a *General report*. Page 3 concerned the *Financial situation of school funds*. On page 4, certain information about the *School* was asked for. In 1940, the form was modified, but only a few headings on page 1 were changed. Page 2, which became page 4, no longer had subdivisions, which left greater latitude to the Brother Visitor when making his *Recommendations* or drawing up his *Report* on the community. At the end of the visit, a copy of the “recommendations” for the community and for the Brother Director was left with the community. These recommendations were then entered into an “Administration register”.

Answers to a certain number of questions were conditioned naturally by what they referred to, and by the way they were phrased. On the other hand, the Brother Visitor had greater freedom when filling in the empty spaces left for him. On the basis of the evaluation made by the Brother Visitor, we can gain some idea of what was considered unsatisfactory in the life of the community, and what was thought appropriate. By examining each of these two aspects, we shall try to give some idea of how the Brothers lived their religious and apostolic life.

– Negative aspects

As the questionnaire the Brother Visitor had to fill in concentrated above all on specific points of regularity, it clearly highlighted shortcomings in this area. In the same way, the recommendations made to the community and to the Brother Director, as well as the general report, frequently brought up these shortcomings. The way the Brothers acquitted themselves of their “employment” also was assessed.

The shortcomings referred to could be relatively unimportant, consisting usually of negligence in the way of doing spiritual exercises, the study of catechism, recreation, the “advertisement” of defects, etc. Mention also was made of coming late for certain “exercises” or of being absent from them. Regarding school, we find, for example, reference to gaps in knowledge where catechism was concerned.

Sometimes the shortcomings condemned were more serious, such as going out alone without permission; or, in the context of the school, slackness in supervision, or a lack of prudence in relations with the pupils. In certain cases, attention was drawn to an abnormal situation, and serious steps were demanded to rectify it.

What was the overall situation? A careful examination of a certain number of reports and a more rapid perusal of many more, gives the impression that, even if more or less everywhere some shortcomings were observed, irregularity or slackness were far from being predominant, even where, because of circumstances, in particular during the war years, some adaptation had to be made.

Given all this, one may wonder what Brother Arèse Casimir meant when he spoke of the need of a “religious renewal” in the Institute.

He may have had in mind a certain number of particular cases going back to a previous period known as the “time of secularisation”. Without wishing to exaggerate its significance, we shall give one example.

In 1947, in an autobiography entitled “Who is this man?”, a poet called Pierre Emmanuel gave a less than flattering description of the Brothers he had had as teachers, in the years 1932 to 1934, in the primary school section of an establishment called “Les Lazaristes”, in Lyon. In 1970, in a reworking of this work, entitled *Autobiographies*, the author once again depicted the same Brothers, with the exception of the youngest, in the same unflattering terms. The publication of this work upset somewhat a number of Brothers who knew about it. Subsequently, it appears that the author agreed he had exaggerated. Be that as it may, a perusal of the reports of the visits to the community in those same years enables us to judge to what extent the author’s description corresponds to reality. This is what the Brother Visitor wrote in the report dated March 28th 1933:

“This community is quite regular: the religious spirit of most of the Brothers is improving. This improvement is unfortunately slowed down by some individuals - the old leaven of a misunderstood secularisation - and by contact with the lay teachers on the school staff, who are mercenaries rather than educators, and imbued with worldly sophistry”.

So the views of the author were not wholly unfounded. However, from this example, we cannot draw any conclusions which apply to all the Brothers involved in the early stages of “secularisation” (see LS 11, p. 140 ff).

Perhaps the Vicar General had in mind some personal situations brought about by the Second World War, involving Brothers who had been soldiers, prisoners or deported, and who found it difficult to re-adjust to a regular life with all its demands. Or perhaps he was referring to the case of certain parts of the Institute which, during the conflict, had been cut off from contact with the headquarters of the Institute, and where the local superiors had taken measures dictated by circumstances but not corresponding exactly with the norms in force in the Institute.

Was the overall situation of the Institute really a cause for concern? It is true, as we shall see, that in the years preceding the Second World War, the Institute had continued to be weakened by a constant haemorrhage of Brothers. The war and its aftermath brought further losses to the Institute, not only in terms of human lives, but also because the current situation contributed to the departure of a larger number of Brothers. If, in this situation, the Brother Vicar General's call for "religious renewal" meant he wanted the Institute to make a new start with greater enthusiasm, then this evidently was very much to be desired, and the kind of new beginning represented by the post-war period offered just the right conditions for it.

– Positive aspects

If Brother Visitors pointed out the shortcomings and inadequacies of communities in their reports, they often also had occasion to express satisfaction at seeing the desire of the Brothers to be faithful to their religious obligations; they praised the mutual understanding which reigned in the community, or acknowledged the diligence of the Brothers in fulfilling their role as teachers. This indicated that, in their eyes, it was a good community.

A perusal of the visit reports, however, reveals that Visitors differed in the way they assessed situations. To simplify, we can mention two different approaches. In the first place, it is clear that many Visitors restricted themselves to filling in the form as it stood, making a list of good points and bad points, and making appropriate recommendations relative to these points. If they added some remarks with a view to motivating the Brothers, they were quite brief and superficial. This is particularly noticeable when one sees how recommendations left by Brother Visitors are summarised when they are entered into the "Administration Register".

J. M. J.
St J.-B^{te}
—
INSTITUT
DES
Frères des Écoles Chrétiennes

RAPPORT DE VISITE

DISTRICT

de

Maison de Bourg (Ain)

Lyon

| OBJETS | APPRÉCIATION |
|--|---|
| <p>RÉGULARITÉ</p> <p>1. Lever et coucher. — 2. Lecture de table. — 3. Silence. — 4. Voyages sans permission. — 5. Repas hors de la maison, ou dans la maison avec des étrangers. — 6. Sorties. — 7. Retour des classes à l'heure. — 8. Jeunes de Règle.</p> | <p>1 Réguliers — 2 Incomplets par suite de la présence des élèves. 3 Bien — 4 et 5 et 6 Moyen 8 On fait le possible</p> |
| <p>PIÉTÉ</p> <p>1. Exercices journaliers (Ponctualité, omission). — 2. Le très saint Sacrement est-il conservé dans la chapelle? — 3. Soins, dévotion, propreté, par rapport à tout ce qui sert au culte divin. — 4. Heures S^{te} Messe. — 5. Confession. — 6. Communion</p> | <p>1. Très Bien 2. Bien 3. Très Bien 4 — 6. Moyens et 7. Régulier 8. Quotidien</p> |
| <p>EXERCICES SPIRITUELS</p> <p>1. Reddition de compte de conduite. — 2. Avertissement des défauts. — 3. Coupe. — 4. Conférences. — 5. Retraite du mois. — 6. Lecture spirituelle. — 7. Lectures indiquées dans le calendrier religieux. — 8. Lecture des Décrets: <i>Quemadmodum</i>. — sur la Communion quotidienne.</p> | <p>1 et 4 — S. P. F. D. n'est pas 2. Très Bien — 3. Pas assez souvent individuelle 5, 6 et 7 Bien</p> |
| <p>SOINS CORPORELS</p> <p>1. Nourriture selon la règle. — 2. Vestiaire et lingerie. — 3. Mobilier. — 4. Propreté. — 5. Soins des malades. — 6. La maison est-elle convenable?</p> | <p>Tous les soins corporels sont assurés selon la Règle</p> |
| <p>ENSEIGNEMENT</p> <p>1. Étude et récitation du catéchisme. — 2. Catéchisme en communauté. — 3. Leçons en communauté. — 4. Examens et compositions. — 5. Conférences pédagogiques.</p> | <p>1. Facile à réviser — 2. Difficile 3, 4 et 5. Très Difficile à cause du nombre restreint des Frères</p> |
| <p>RÉCRÉATIONS</p> <p>1. Durée. — 2. Entretiens utiles et édifiants. — 3. Politique. — 4. Jeux. — 5. Les promenades ont-elles lieu selon la règle? — 6. Comment se passent les vacances? — Suit-on la Règle?</p> | <p>1, 2 et 3. Bien — 4. Moyen 5. Le plus possible 6. Autant qu'en peut</p> |
| <p>UNION ET CHARITÉ</p> <p>1. Respect. — 2. Politesse. — 3. Antipathies. — 4. Amitiés particulières.</p> | <p>1 et 2. Très Bien — 3 et 4. Moyen</p> |
| <p>EMPLOI</p> <p>1. Chacun remplit-il bien son emploi? — 2. Économe. — 3. Frères de classe. — 4. Les leçons sont-elles bien préparées? — 5. Les devoirs sont-ils corrigés? — 6. Le catéchisme est-il bien préparé et fait tout le temps prescrit par la Règle?</p> | <p>1, 2 et 3. Très Bien 4, 5 et 6. Le mieux possible</p> |
| <p>RAPPORTS</p> <p>1. Avec les autorités (Clergé, Municipalité, Inspecteurs, Préfet). — 2. Avec le public (visites actives et passives). — 3. Personnes du sexe dans la maison ou dans les écoles.</p> | <p>1 et 2. Très Bien 3. Une suppression d'une cuisinière</p> |
| <p>REGISTRES</p> <p>1. Personnel de la communauté. — 2. Personnel enseignant. — 3. Administration. — 4. Rénovation. — 5. Historique de l'établissement. — 6. Charges de fondations: messes, etc. — 7. Recettes et dépenses. — 8. Livre du magasin. — 9. Compte des classes. — 10. Inscription des élèves. — 11. Chauffage. — Ces registres sont-ils bien tenus et à jour?</p> | <p>Tous les registres sont très bien tenus.</p> |

RECOMMANDATIONS ÉCRITES LAISSÉES PAR LE F. VISITEUR

| A la Communauté | Au Frère Directeur |
|--|--|
| 1 ^o Porter son apostolat sur la prière, sur une vie religieuse toute animée par l'esprit surnaturel. | 1 ^o Être prêt à recevoir les Frères en reddition malgré les difficultés administratives de la maison. |
| 2 ^o Entendre dans toutes les classes, la Révision au St-Enfant Jésus. | 2 ^o Ne pas négliger les confidences et la coupe individuelle. |
| 3 ^o Faire le possible pour se ménager le temps de la préparation et de l'étude au catéchisme. | 3 ^o Entendre l'esprit de foi dans la direction. |
| 4 ^o Prendre tous les moyens possibles pour amener les élèves, surtout les grands, à la réception plus fréquente des sacrements. | 4 ^o Relire de temps en temps les chap. XXIII, XXIV et XXV de la Règle du G. ^o |
| | 5 ^o Ne pas oublier d'organiser le 25 de chaque mois, une « journée des vocations ». |

COPIE DES ORDONNANCES PROVISOIRES

Blank lines for copying provisional ordinances.

RAPPORT SOMMAIRE SUR L'ENSEMBLE

L'esprit religieux de cette Communauté est excellent. La charité unit tous les cœurs qui ne marchandent pas leur dévouement. Les exercices sont réguliers; mais les surveillances dans une maison qui comprend un personnel, un externat et une école gratuite, occasionnent quelques absences que les visiteurs suppléent de leur mieux.

Le Fr. Directeur un peu jeune (2^e année de Directeurat) n'est pas bien fait pour les conférences et recevoir les Frères en reddition. Chacun est en règle pour la pauvreté. Les Frères gémissent de l'indifférence religieuse qui caractérise les élèves en général. Ils s'efforcent de triompher de cette résistance passive par la prière, de sérieux réflexions et le bon exemple, afin de travailler à la culture des vocations. Dans ce même but, ils ont établi la Congrégation du St-Enfant Jésus.

A Bourg, le 20 janvier 1930

Le Visiteur,

J. Chabot

N. B. — Le Frère Visiteur conservera copie du présent état.

Even when the general tone of the report was positive, it can hardly be said that its approach was particularly stimulating. It gave the impression rather of encouraging the tendency the Brothers had to limit themselves to a somewhat formal regularity, to fulfilling a “duty of state”, all very correct but not very enthusiastic. This approach ran the risk of encouraging those who, while favouring a strict adherence to the Rule, were more concerned with observing the strict letter of the law than with the spirit in which it was written. We have already come across this attitude, and the problems it created, in other periods. In the period under consideration here, it is not explicitly reflected in visit reports or *Notices*, but it existed nevertheless, if we are to judge from the recollections of certain Brothers. Also this kind of report did not permit the identification of Brothers and communities which were out of the ordinary by comparison with a majority that was somewhat uniform.

On the other hand, we find that other Brother Visitors adopted a different approach. They managed to free themselves of the rigid framework imposed upon them. In particular, they addressed the Brothers less formally, expressed their satisfaction by congratulating the Brothers and their Director and wrote at greater length in a way that encouraged the Brothers and strengthened their convictions. We find a good example of this in a series of reports written by the Brother Visitors of the Districts of Moulins (1931 - 1945) and of Rheims (1936 - 1945). Copies of these reports are kept in the archives of the District of France, and have been studied in detail.

Reports such as these, more so than others, give us a picture of the kind of Brothers, for example, the Brother Visitor of Rheims was addressing, when he wrote to one of his communities, “Congratulations on the regularity and punctuality of the community: may an interior spirit breathe life into them and give them their full spiritual value...” (Bar le Duc, 1938-39), or when the Visitor of Moulins wrote about a community where “to the exterior regularity which reigns supreme is added the practice of an intense interior life...” (Bourges, 1934). Likewise, two years previously, a number of Brothers in the Bourges community had been congratulated on “their good spirit”. Elsewhere, they were commended for their “good relations” (Moulins Saint Gilles, 1931). In some reports, we find the Brother Visitor acknowledging and praising the professional standards and apostolic zeal of the Brothers. For example, the Brother Visitor of Rheims notes regarding one community, “Dedicated Brothers, Apostles” (Metz Saint Augustin, 1929). Elsewhere, we read how a Brother Director, recently appointed to a community, was encouraged “to take advantage of the welcome he received from the community and of the positive influence he had on the pupils, to

promote a spirit of piety...” (Moulins Saint Gilles, 1938). Speaking more generally, the Visitor of this same District made no effort to conceal his satisfaction when he invited the Brothers of one of his houses “to maintain in the community what makes it attractive: regularity, zeal, charity, good spirit, union of hearts, generous hospitality” (Nevers, 1942).

Did the authors of such reports embellish the facts? It is true that, while we tend to notice more readily things that are wrong, it is easier in practice to say what is working well. However, we see that the Brother Visitors who paid compliments such as these could also point out shortcomings they had found, or more serious failings. Their assessment of a community could also vary from year to year, if only because the Brother Director or some Brothers had been changed. It has to be said, however, that such favourable assessments are not exceptional, and that from what we learn in particular from their obituaries, many Brothers were remembered as profoundly religious men, pleasant companions and zealous educators.

In their visit reports, Brother Visitors also invited the Brothers to concern themselves with recruitment. In certain communities, including those which deserved the compliments we noted earlier, the efforts of the Brothers in this area were hardly crowned with success. Other communities with similar concerns obtained better results. There were Brothers whose influence was such that it alone was sufficient to attract youngsters to follow their example. Those who joined the Institute in this way, helped to ensure its growth up to the outbreak of war in 1939 and, even during it, in some cases.

The overall picture which emerges from the visit reports and from the *Notices nécrologiques* is that of a particular type of Brother that is fairly uniform, characterised by habitual fidelity to religious obligations, good relations with superiors and fellow Brothers, and a conscientious accomplishment of professional and apostolic tasks, coloured, however, by a certain degree of routine and formality. On the other hand, insufficiently motivated Brothers, whose initial enthusiasm had grown cold - a state which could lead them to leave the Institute or result in colourless lives - were so many exceptions. In contrast elsewhere, we find examples of Brothers the strength of whose convictions was reflected in the intensity of their religious commitment, the quality of their relations in community and outside, and their apostolic influence. Of these Brothers, some were more sensitive than others to the changes brought about in particular by the war, or to those beginning to take place in the Church.

Conclusion

There is no direct connection between the two parts of our survey in this supplement, in the sense that the second part is not intended to measure the efficacy of the means used to lead and inspire examined in the first. Of course, the Brothers could have been influenced by the exhortations of their Superiors, but their attitude reflected also, for example, the atmosphere in community, and the influence exerted by the Brother Director and other Brothers.

On the other hand, there is a noticeable similarity between the model proposed in the guidelines of the Superiors and the type of Brother that comes to light in many visit reports or *Notices nécrologiques*. This model, to which many Brothers conformed, perpetuated without much change the model which had been proposed since the end of the 19th century, in the Institute and in religious congregations as a whole. In this regard, it seems we can apply to the Institute - with the necessary qualifications - what was written about religious congregations in general during the period under consideration here:

“Extension of their field of action and accumulation of successive tasks dulled their vigilance and even paved the way for the onset of real sclerosis. Regarding the outside, they welcomed whatever could draw attention to themselves in a vocation pool which they realised was finite. Internally, there prevailed a rigorous opposition to change. Essentially, it was based on the immortalisation of the foundation or of the restoration in the 19th century. The prescriptions of these glorious events were considered to be untouchable. They were in fact stricter and more meticulous than the old rules. And the 1917 Code of Canon Law made prescriptions even more rigid. Chapters and Superiors no longer felt the need to interpret texts of which the letter was the law...” (*Histoire du Christianisme* XII, 200, 201).

But, at the same time, from a fairly uniform mass, there emerged Brothers characterised by an interior dynamism translated into apostolic influence, who were recognised and encouraged at least by some Brother Visitors. For their part, other Brothers, because of circumstances, had to face situations they could cope with only if the strength of their convictions overcame what was simply conformity to obligations respected by force of habit. In both cases, we see a type of Brother who, without rejecting the commitments he had made, wanted to be less restricted by excessively formalistic requirements. To give only one example, there is no doubt that in Canada, Brother Marie-Victorin (Conrad Kirouac) had considerable influence in this way.

Chapter 3 - DEVELOPMENT AND EXTENSION OF THE INSTITUTE (1928-1946)

Introduction

In the period 1928 to 1939, the Institute encountered difficulties in a number of countries, but in many others it was able to develop without too many obstacles. It also established itself in new countries. The war and post-war period was not conducive to the development of the Institute in countries affected by the conflict, but it did not prevent development in others. On the other hand, the general tendency to expand which characterised the 30s came to a halt.

In dealing with the 18 years under consideration here, and more particularly with the first 12 years, there is no need to dwell on each country in which the Institute was already established, as we did in the preceding volume (*1875 - 1928 LS 11*). In fact, apart from what we mentioned in the first chapter of the present volume, there is little to add to what was said regarding the preceding period. Instead, we shall turn our attention to the various countries where the Institute established itself in the years preceding the Second World War.

Development of the Institute

In overall terms, the Institute slowly developed during the period concerned here. The extent of this development varies depending on how we group the various Districts, either in the same country, or in different countries which are somehow related to one another. In some Districts, development was hindered by events. It was conditioned also by the number of new admissions to the Institute, and by such factors as the perseverance of the Brothers, and the increase in their life expectancy.

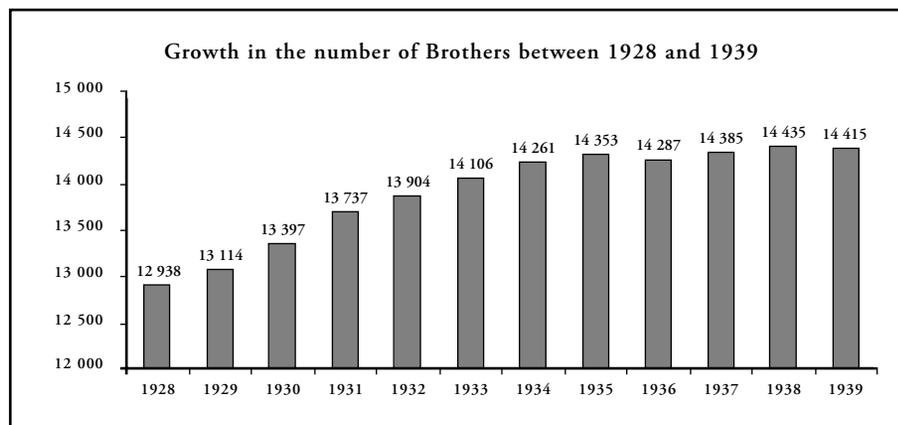
– Growth in the number of Brothers

Pre-war years

The increase in the number of Brothers which occurred between 1908 and 1928 (see LS 11, 192) continued everywhere in the years that followed. This can be seen from the histogram on the next page based on end-of-year statistics.

As we can observe, the increase was relatively rapid until 1934. It then slowed down and, in 1936 there was even a drop in numbers due, in particular, to the situation in Spain.

Numbers then increased until 1938, and in 1939, numbers dropped again. We shall now show how numbers increased in the various groups of Districts between 1928 and 1939.



In several countries or groups of countries, there was a steady growth in numbers. This was the case:

- in the two Districts of Belgium and Holland. These were joined by the Congo District in 1936, which added about 160 Brothers to the initial figure of 1,363;
- in the five Districts of the United States. The initial total of 1,093 Brothers was increased by nearly 500. However, while there was an increase of 150 Brothers in the District of New York, it was only of 50 in that of San Francisco;
- in Canada. Here, the initial total of Brothers in the three Districts together was 1,066. There was an overall increase of 270 Brothers. A slight drop in numbers in the District of Montreal after 1935, was compensated for by an increase in that of Quebec and, to a lesser extent, in that of Toronto;
- in Italy, the two Districts together initially numbered 560 Brothers. This number increased by 160, even if there was a slight drop in numbers in 1932 and 1933;
- in the Districts of Ireland-England and Australia, if we consider them as one group. The initial total of 403 Brothers increased by a little more than 200. This was due to the growth of these Districts, and especially to that of Ireland-England;
- in the two Districts of the British Far East, where the initial total of 200 Brothers was increased by about 100. The number of Brothers in the District of Colombo, however, remained below 100.

Following a period of growth, other groups of Districts stagnated in various degrees and, in some cases, there was a drop in the number of Brothers. This was the case:

- in the large group formed by the Districts of Latin America. Their initial overall total of 1,402 Brothers rose by almost 250 in the period leading up to 1932, but fell subsequently because of a decrease in numbers in the District of Bogota from 1934 onwards, and in that of Ecuador, from 1936. The initial overall total was reached again only in 1936;

- in the group of Districts formed by the French colonies. The initial overall total of 371 Brothers rose by 76 in the period leading up to 1935. Numbers then remained more or less stable, with a fall in numbers in Algeria and stagnation in Madagascar-La Réunion, and an increase in Indochina.

In France, the 23 Districts were reduced to 21 by the amalgamation of three Districts in the Lyons area. The overall number of Brothers fluctuated around the 4,000 mark. Districts differed, however:

- There were small Districts which failed to recover, and whose numbers never rose above the 100 mark. This was the case of Bayonne, Bordeaux and Caen;

- The District of Paris had more than 400 Brothers; Nantes and Rheims hovered around the same figure, and Quimper numbered more than 300 Brothers.

There was a fall in numbers in the countries affected by the events occurring in the period 1936 to 1939:

- The three Districts of central Europe which had increased their numbers by some 180 Brothers, reaching a total of 633, lost more than 200 as a result of the Nazi regime.

- The three Districts of Spain which had increased their numbers by about 150 Brothers, reaching a total of 944 in 1935, suffered a tragic decrease in numbers. They more or less restored their original numbers in 1939.

In one group of Districts, which initially had 626 Brothers, numbers steadily declined with a loss of about 100 Brothers. The group concerned consisted of the District of Constantinople (or Istanbul), the District of Jerusalem and the District of Alexandria (Egypt). The decrease in numbers affected principally the first of these Districts, especially after 1935, when it suffered the effects of the 'nationalistic' policy of the countries that composed it. Alexandria also was affected from 1936 onwards. Jerusalem maintained its numbers more or less.

The war years and the immediate post-war period

In 1939, the end of year statistics already reflected the conflict which had begun in September. During the war, it was not possible to update these statistics. A set of statistics produced at the end of 1946 and marked “confidential” - no doubt because of some uncertainty regarding the figures - can serve as a point of comparison with that of 1939.

It reveals that certain groups of Districts had maintained or even increased their numbers. For example, in the United States, numbers had risen from 1,572 to 1,592 Brothers; in Canada, from 1,332 to 1,346; in Latin America, from 1,654 to 1,820; in Spain, from 926 to 1,419; in Ireland-England and Australia, from 615 to 847. In France, the number of Brothers, which had dropped to 3,344 in 1939, had risen to 3,439.

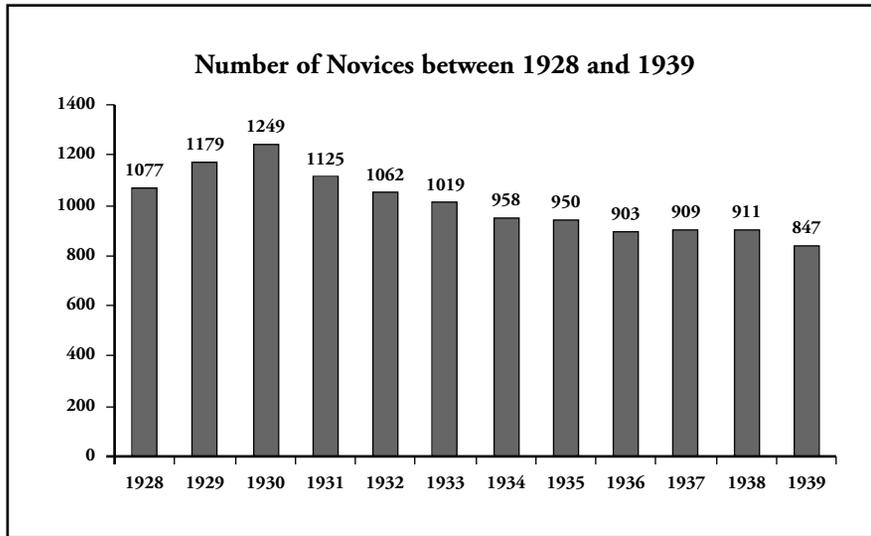
Other Districts had suffered to a greater or lesser degree on account of the war. In the Districts of Belgium-Holland and the Congo, numbers had dropped from 1,523 to 1,352; in central European Districts, from 586 to 402; in Italy, from 719 to 686; in the Near East, from 539 to 435; in the group formed by Indochina, Algeria, Madagascar-La Réunion, from 435 to 361; in the two Districts of Colombo and Penang, from 303 to 230.

Overall, the number of Brothers in the Institute had diminished. A comparison of the figures for 1939 and 1946 shows a decrease of 208 Brothers. If we take into account the victims of the war and the number of Brothers leaving, including those who left after the end of the war, this figure is relatively low, thanks to the increase of numbers in Districts which had continued to grow.

– Admissions to the Institute

The growth of the Institute was affected by the number of persons joining it. The Institute statistics compiled on December 31st each year included the total number of “subjects in formation”: junior novices, novices and scholastics. The overall number varies a great deal over the years, especially because in times of trouble, the junior novices are the first to leave. But the most significant statistics are those relating to the novices.

We see that, after a rapid increase before 1930, the number of novices then fell and stabilised in the period from 1936 to 1938, despite an increase in social turmoil. We need to restrict our observations to the period up to and including 1938, as the figures given for 1939 were already affected by the war. However, the downward trend that is noticeable from 1931 onwards did not affect all the countries to the same degree.



In some countries, in the period from 1928 to 1938, the number of novices remained more or less stable:

- In Italy, the number of novices remained stable around the 40 mark, and sometimes reached 50 and more;
- In Ireland-England and Australia, the number of novices fluctuated around the 50 mark.

In other countries, after an initial decrease, the number of novices increased in the final part of the period. This was the case:

- in France where, after rising to a maximum of 260 in 1930, the number of novices stabilised around the 200 mark, before returning to the 250 level from 1936 onwards.
- in Latin America, where the number of novices rose to about 220 in 1930, then fell to below 150 after 1935, and then in 1938 returned to the 1930 level.

In many countries or groups of countries, the fluctuation in the number of novices reflected the fluctuation in the overall figures for the Institute. For example:

- in the United States, a slower rate of growth had brought the number of novices up to just over 140 in 1933. This figure then fell to about 100 in 1936-1937.
- in Belgium, the number of novices reached a maximum of 94 in 1932, and then stabilised around the 60 mark.

– in Canada, the total number of novices rose to 140 in 1929, and then dropped progressively and stabilised around the 100 mark from 1935 onwards.

In some countries, the number of novices dropped because of adverse circumstances:

– in Spain, the total number of novices in the three Districts in 1929 was 140. After 1931, it hovered around the 70 mark. It is difficult to arrive at a precise figure for the period 1936 to 1938, but it was below 40. In 1939, there was a clear recovery with 87 novices.

– in central Europe, after coming close to the 100 mark at various times before 1934, the number of novices fell to 36 in 1938 for the three Districts.

While we have no statistics for the Institute as a whole during the war period, we can say that in many countries, even in those affected by the conflict, the number of admissions to the Institute did not drop.

From circulars and, in particular from correspondence between Brothers Assistants and Brother Visitors, it is clear that “recruitment” continued to be a major concern for the Institute. Even in the best years, it was considered insufficient to meet needs. And so we find that the “lack of personnel” is constantly deplored.

This problem was particularly serious in missionary countries. While in Indochina the number of novices remained stable around the 20 mark, in Madagascar-La Réunion it was only exceptionally that it rose that high. In the Districts of Colombo, Penang or Algiers, the number of novices never rose above 10. As a consequence, missionary novitiates and other Districts had to come to their aid. This was even more essential where local “recruitment” was not possible, as in the Near East or Egypt. The number of novices at the Generalate novitiate approached or reached the 30 mark before 1933. Subsequently, numbers fell before rising in 1937, the last year in which Institute statistics mention the novices of the Mother House District. At Saint Maurice l'Exil, the number of novices destined for the Near East and Egypt rose to 30 in 1929, but did not always remain above 20 in the years that followed. In 1936, an agreement was drawn up between the Districts of Ireland-England and Penang, whereby a missionary section would be set up in the house of formation at Inglewood House, in England, which would send 10 scholastics each year to the District of Penang (GA NA 301/6).

It was the same for certain Districts in Latin America, which were far from being self-sufficient. They depended on the novitiate at Premia de Mar, in Spain. This novitiate was attached to the District of Panama. According to Institute statistics, numbers there

reached 37 in 1930. During the period between 1936 and 1938 it was closed because of the situation of the Institute in Spain.

While it was important to have enough novices, it was no less important to train them well. The tendency in the Institute at that time was to choose Directors of novices from among Brothers who were noted more for their religious soundness than for their apostolic experience. Because of the purpose assigned to novitiates, novices tended to be trained for a 'monastic' form of religious life which had little to do with the vocation of the Brothers. Directors were often left in place for quite a long time, and the result was that the type of formation given was perpetuated and there was little chance of renewal. This was all the more so, as Visitor Generals, many of whom had been novice Masters, had control to some extent over the formation given.

– Perseverance of the Brothers.

When we compare a graph showing the total number of Brothers and one showing the number of novices, a question comes to mind. How was the Institute able to grow first rapidly and then more slowly, while the number of novices, after a rapid rise, progressively fell?

This may have been due to a higher rate of perseverance among the Brothers, and consequently to a decrease in the number Brothers leaving. A register giving the names of Brothers who left the Institute (GA GE 958) will give us a clearer picture of the situation. In the period under consideration, this register, initially drawn up with great precision each year, mentions from 1937 onwards, a certain number of defections which had occurred in previous years. This enables us to know fairly accurately the number of Brothers who left, even during the most difficult years experienced by the Institute. The following table shows the number of Brothers registered as having left in the period 1928 to 1939, as well as the ratio between the Brothers who left and the total number of Brothers in the Institute during the same years.

| | 1928 | 1929 | 1930 | 1931 | 1932 | 1933 | 1934 | 1935 | 1936 | 1937 | 1938 | 1939 |
|--------------------|------|-------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|------|------|
| Number Left | 386 | 384 | 372 | 377 | 415 | 411 | 396 | 401 | 402 | 408 | 437 | 637 |
| Ratio: 1 to | 33,5 | 34,15 | 36,0 | 36,4 | 33,5 | 34,3 | 36,0 | 35,8 | 35,4 | 35,25 | 33,0 | 22,6 |

If we compare this report with similar ones drawn up for other periods in the history of the Institute (LS 9, 147 and LS 11, 59), we can say that, on the whole, the figures we

find in it up to 1938 are reasonable, if not satisfactory. The Institute continued, in fact, to suffer from a form of lethargy brought on by the number of Brothers leaving. The figure given for 1939, which is clearly bad, reflects no doubt the events which had occurred previously in central Europe and Spain, as well as the beginning of the Second World War.

This kind of ratio between the number of Brothers leaving each year and the total number of Brothers in the Institute was not enough of itself to compensate for the drop in the number of novices noted from 1931 onwards. Clearly we have to turn to other data. It seems that the Institute was benefitting from a reduction in the number of premature deaths and from the increase in life-expectancy which had been observed in many countries before the 1939-1945 war. It is quite difficult to demonstrate this. However, by basing ourselves on the ratio between annual deaths and the total number of Brothers in the Institute, we can show, for example, that:

- in the last ten years of the 19th century, this ratio fluctuated between 1:67 and 1:51;
- in the period 1928-1938, this ratio remained between 1:74 and 1:67, if we exclude 1936 when, because of the high number of deaths due to the Spanish revolution, the ratio rose to 1:42.

The Second World War obviously affected such calculations, especially in countries directly involved in it.

In the period 1929-1938, the Institute increased its overall numbers by some 1,500 Brothers which, relatively speaking, is not much over a period of 11 years. In a report presented to the 1946 Chapter, Brother Alcime Marie, the Procurator to the Holy See, observed that, while the Institute had grown by 29% in the period 1920 to 1938, this growth was much smaller than that of other religious orders (GA EE 228-4, reg. 3, 146). In many countries, its growth was proportionally inferior to that of the population.

Expansion of the Institute

At the same time as the Institute developed, it also expanded to a certain extent. This can be demonstrated in two different ways, either by examining the evolution in the number of communities, at least in the period 1928 to 1938, for which there are readily available statistics; or by seeing how the Institute expanded geographically by moving into new countries.

– Christian countries

By Christian countries we mean those where Christianity was the dominant religion. It was above all in these countries that the Institute was established, where either Catholicism was widely established, or Catholics constituted a large minority.

Evolution in the number of communities

A table showing the number of communities at 2 year intervals enables us to see the evolution that occurred in groups of Districts and overall in Christian countries in the period 1928 to 1938.

N.B. The drop in the number of communities (3) given for central Europe in 1938 does not give a true picture of the situation, since, in Germany and Austria, most of the communities surviving after 1936 or 1938 no longer ran schools, while in the District of Czechoslovakia there had been a slight increase. The figures given for Spain in 1936 and 1938 are not reliable.

| | 1928 | 1930 | 1932 | 1934 | 1936 | 1938 |
|----------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| France | 497 | 481 | 473 | 457 | 419 | 436 |
| Latin America | 120 | 126 | 131 | 131 | 133 | 132 |
| Belgium | 114 | 117 | 121 | 120 | 111 | 109 |
| USA | 97 | 95 | 100 | 97 | 100 | 99 |
| Spain | 83 | 101 | 100 | 108 | 39 | 62 |
| Canada | 77 | 78 | 81 | 84 | 85 | 84 |
| Central Europe | 51 | 52 | 53 | 52 | 53 | 49 |
| Ireland-England, Australia | 50 | 58 | 62 | 67 | 71 | 75 |
| Italy | 45 | 46 | 43 | 43 | 45 | 48 |
| TOTAL | 1 134 | 1 154 | 1 164 | 1 159 | 1 056 | 1 094 |

Even if the overall figure of 1,134 given for 1928 rose by about 30 communities before the drop in numbers resulting from the political upheavals in Spain and central Europe, we can say that, with some exceptions, Districts in Christian countries made little effort to create new communities. No doubt this reflects a period in which the Institute already had great difficulty in ensuring the maintenance and internal development of its exist-

ing establishments. Moreover, this situation obliged it to have recourse to the services of an increasing number of 'lay teachers', as they were called in the annual statistical returns. This lack of effort can be seen also as a consequence of the uncertainty created by the Great Depression and international tension.

Establishment in new countries

We see also that, for the same reasons, the Institute did not establish itself in many new Christian countries in the period from 1928 to 1938.

Portugal (1933)

The threats facing the Church in Spain following the establishment of the Second Republic led the Superiors of the Institute to look for places of refuge for the Brothers in other countries. With this in view, the District of Valladolid turned to Portugal. When the Archbishop of Braga invited the Brothers to take over an orphanage in this town, the offer was accepted. On September 7th 1933, nine Brothers took charge of 141 children in the *Colegio dos orfaos de Sao Gaetano*. The beginnings were difficult: the Brothers had to restore discipline in this establishment and make it viable financially. This they did quite rapidly.

Dominican Republic (1933)

In the part of the Island of Santo Domingo occupied by the Dominican Republic, the Apostolic Nuncio asked the Brothers to open a school in the capital Santo Domingo. The Brother Visitor of the Antilles-Mexico District went to the country to study the situation and gave a favourable response. In September 1933, 3 Brothers arrived in the capital to open a school. They started with primary school classes which also taught French. During the course of the same year, the Brothers opened another school in Santiago de los Caballeros in the same country, but this school closed in 1941.

Costa Rica (1935)

The Brothers were invited by the government of this central American country to take over a rehabilitation centre in the capital San Jose. Between 1927 and 1935, a great deal of correspondence was exchanged between the authorities and the Superiors regarding the matter. Finally, in November 1935, a community of Brothers was set up at the *Reformatorio San Dimas*, but, after a year, the Brother Visitor of the District of Panama on which the community depended decided to withdraw the Brothers on account of the difficulties they were encountering. However, some Brothers returned: a contract was

signed in November 1940 and, in February 1941, the Brothers found themselves once again in the *Reformatorio (La Salle en el Istmo Centroamericano, 145)*.

– Missionary countries

By ‘missionary countries’ we mean countries in which missionaries from other countries tried to establish the Christian religion, and in particular, Catholicism. Regarding the countries where the Brothers were already present, or where they had just arrived, we need to make some distinctions.

Evolution in the number of communities

A certain number of Districts in the Institute were considered to be ‘missionary’. These can be divided into three groups. The table shows how the number of communities evolved in these groups.

| Districts | 1928 | 1930 | 1932 | 1934 | 1936 | 1938 |
|---|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Constantinople, Jerusalem, Alexandria | 45 | 44 | 42 | 41 | 37 | 36 |
| Indochina, Algeria, Madagascar-La Réunion | 39 | 43 | 42 | 46 | 44 | 44 |
| Colombo, Penang | 18 | 21 | 22 | 26 | 28 | 27 |

If in the first group, the number of its communities fell, it was mainly because of the reduction of communities in the District of Constantinople. In this District, Greece was a Christian country, but because Catholics there were a minority, it was considered to be a ‘missionary’ country. In the group including Indochina, Algeria and Madagascar-La Réunion, there was a slight increase in the number of communities because of Indochina. In the two Districts composed of communities established in British colonies in southeast Asia, there was an overall increase in the number of communities thanks to expansion in the District of Colombo. The District of Penang included the Philippines, which was a Christian country but, as far as the Institute was concerned, it was considered to be a ‘missionary’ country. The overall number of communities in these three groups increased by about 15 in the period from 1928 to 1938.

In 1936, the District of the Congo was added to this number. Previously, its communities had belonged to the Belgian Districts. We need to mention also the 8 communities in Cyrenian Libya, the Dodecanese and Greece, belonging to Italian Districts; the communities established in the Far East by Canadian Districts to which they still belonged; the community in King William's Town in South Africa, which belonged to the District of Ireland-England, to which was added that of East London in 1934.

The arrival of Brothers in new missionary countries

French Morocco (1929)

In 1932, Brother Adrien, in his correspondence with Brother Junien Victor, Assistant at that time, twice mentioned Morocco which was then a French Protectorate. On June 26th he wrote, "Regarding the primary school in Rabat, you can proceed if you have the Brothers..." (GA EE 284/7). And on August 8th, "All the better if we can establish ourselves in Rabat without imprudence. You take possession of Morocco for good. Here we are with three houses after a short time" (id.). The Brothers had arrived in Casablanca in 1929, and taken over a school and the cathedral choir school. In 1930, they had opened a small boarding school at Fedhala (GA NL 452). The establishment opened in Rabat in 1933 was therefore the third one. In 1936, a community was established at Meknes (GA NL 453).

Japan and Manchukuo (1932 and 1936)

As early as 1927, the Roman Congregation Propaganda Fide had expressed the desire to entrust the Brothers with schools in Japan. From 1928 to 1931, the District of Montreal considered a plan to open a house in the diocese of Hakodate. Finally, in October 1932, four Brothers from Canada arrived in Hakodate to study Japanese. When the Brother Visitor of the District of Montreal visited the Brothers in September 1933, the idea of founding a school was discussed. The Brother Visitor visited Manchukuo also. He considered with the Vicar Apostolic of Mukden the possibility of opening a school in that town. In Hakodate, the Brothers acquired some land in 1934 with a view to building on it, but in September 1936, the local parish priest, also a Canadian, was appointed bishop of Sendai, and invited the Brothers to establish themselves there rather than in Hakodate, which was in a military zone. That same year, two Canadian Brothers left for Mukden. The Brothers at Sendai, for their part, opened a language school in 1937. The following year, Brother Assistant Romuald Hosea visited Japan. While there, he decided that young Mizukami, the first Japanese postulant, should make his novitiate

in Indochina; and in Manchukuo, he proposed that a house of studies for Brothers should be opened in Mukden. Five Canadian Brothers arrived there in October 1940. Three of these Brothers went to Kirin, in the same country, in August 1941. In 1942, there was a plan also to make a foundation in Seoul in Korea. When Japan entered the war on December 8th 1941, the situation of the Brothers in this part of the world changed completely.



Ethiopia (1939)

In 1936, Mussolini decided that Italy, which already owned Eritrea, should take over Ethiopia also. In 1939, at the request of the Apostolic Delegate, a junior seminary was entrusted to the Brothers at Addis Abeba, the capital of Ethiopia. In Asmara, in Eritrea, other Brothers took charge of a school for young Italians. The District of Rome and the Italian government signed a contract with a view to build-

ing a large boarding school in the same town (GA NL 301), but the war interfered with this plan.

Aruba (1937)

In 1937, Brothers from the Netherlands, which were still a part of the District of North Belgium, established their own mission in Aruba, an island in the Dutch West Indies. At the request of the Tilburg Brothers - a Dutch congregation - they replaced these Brothers in two schools. The number of Brothers and schools increased until the outbreak of the Second World War. After the war, this expansion continued.

In addition to what had been accomplished, plans were envisaged to send Brothers to other missionary areas. For example, Brother Junien Victor, in a note relating to an audience he had had with Pius XI in 1938, mentions that "a teacher training college in Shanghai has been proposed to us"; and in a letter to Brother James, the Visitor of the District of Penang, he writes that the new bishop of Yunan in China, a former student of the Brothers at Hasparren (District of Bayonne), was asking for Brothers for his diocese (GA EE 285-4/9). Also, in a letter dated December 12th 1939, to the Brother Procurator General responsible for financial affairs, he speaks "of extending our work in the missionary countries where we already are, such as the Philippines, and of founding establishments in countries where we are not yet present, such as Korea, China, Persia, Mozambique" (id.). With a view to setting up a house in China, two Brothers from the Ireland-England District were sent to Indochina to learn the Chinese language. The outbreak of war put paid to these plans, and endangered a number of new or older foundations.

Were the results achieved in the years preceding the Second World War a true reflection of the zeal for the missions manifested by Brother Junien Victor? While these results were not negligible, they were not considerable either. It has to be said that settlement in countries such as Japan and China, where Christians were not respected and where inculturation was necessary, called for considerable effort. We need also to bear in mind the place held by the missions in the Institute at that time. At his audience with Pope Pius XI in 1938, the Brother Superior informed him that "if in 1933 the missionary activity of the Institute was pursued in 129 communities by 1,400 Brothers, of whom more than 400 were indigenous, in the service of 47,000 pupils, this activity had since increased..." (GA EE 285-2/6). As a proportion of the total number of Brothers, this figure was a little less than 10%. Even if this proportion was satisfactory for an Institute which was not dedicated principally to missionary activity, it was not sufficient for it to be able to consider itself a "missionary" Institute.

Conclusion

We have already drawn some conclusions at the end of the various parts of this chapter. They highlight a slowing down of the increase in the number of Brothers, as well as a weakening of the drive to create new communities or establish the Institute in new countries, despite a real interest in missionary activities. We have to see in this the effect of an overall reduction in the number of novices. The Superiors of the Institute were aware of this, and sought to remedy the situation by exhorting the Brothers to be more faithful to their religious commitments and to rekindle their zeal. On the other hand, apart from rare exceptions, they failed to perceive, it would seem, the effects of the changes taking place in society, changes which were accelerated by current events and, in particular, by the Second World War.

3 - ASPECTS OF THE APOSTOLIC MISSION OF THE BROTHERS

In the years leading up to the Second World War and during it, the type of apostolate pursued by the Brothers was little different from that of the preceding period, and so there is little point in repeating what was said at the end of the preceding volume (see LS 11, 225 ff). On the other hand, it is worth noting that in directives given to the Institute, Chapters and Superior Generals laid particular stress on certain aspects of the Brothers' apostolate. These aspects included well-worn ones such as gratuity and the teaching of catechism, or a newer one called Catholic Action. In this supplement, we should like to say more about these aspects.

Gratuity

Gratuity is a recurring theme in the deliberations of General Chapters and in the circulars of Superiors. We have already said much about it in preceding volumes of this history of the Institute, and we need to return to this question in this volume.

– Attention given to the question of gratuity

In the 1928 Chapter, the question of gratuity was treated in the report of the 3rd commission dealing with schools and boarding schools. In its 6th proposition, this commission called for the establishment of free schools next to fee-paying schools, a proposition that was adopted by the Chapter. In the circular giving the results of the Chapter, Brother Adrien insisted on the Institute reaffirming, in particular, its desire to remain faithful to its mission of teaching the poor, and he praised Districts where poor schools were attached to boarding schools (cf. Circ. 266, p. 44).

The importance attached by the same Superior to the question of gratuity is evident also from the circular devoted to this subject, one in a series on the "Commandments of the Society". But what is significant, is that, when he treated the 3rd of these "Commandments", concerned with the teaching given by the Brothers, he restricted himself to two aspects of the subject in 1932, and he reserved the 3rd, regarding gratuity, for the circular dated January 8th 1933.

In this circular, Brother Adrien begins by returning to the example of the holy Founder, and showing how, in the Founder's correspondence relating to school matters, he is concerned solely with gratuitous or charity schools, and insists that "it is in order to run gratuitous schools together and by association that the new-born Society was

formed” (Circ. 278, p. 15). Also, the Founder often had to suffer because of his stance. The Superior draws the conclusion that “we are forced to recognise that our Saint never wavered in his initial conviction regarding the gratuity of schools” (p. 18).

The Superior then says that “in the judgment of Pope Benedict XIII, our Institute was founded for the poor, and that it is as such that he approved it” (p. 19). He goes on to show that, if the vow of gratuity did not apply to boarding schools, these establishments had never been anything but an exception among the working-class schools for the artisans and the poor. Moreover, in the 19th century, these boarding schools had “not only made provision for a number of non fee-paying pupils in their classes, but also maintained a primary school close by, whose expenses they met in full” (p. 23).

Giving a brief history of gratuity in the Institute, the circular recalls that “during the 18th century, gratuity was, in everybody’s eyes, the distinctive characteristic of our schools” (p. 28). After the Revolution, it was “with this characteristic of absolute gratuity that our schools re-opened” (p. 37). Then, when their schools multiplied in number, the Brothers successfully ensured that they kept this characteristic. But “with the direct and absolute intervention of the civil authorities in educational matters...the State saw fit to impose the payment of more or less high fees, either by all children without distinction, as in England, or by certain categories of children, as in France” (p. 44). Rome was asked for instructions. “This was the era of Rescripts”, Brother Adrien writes, recalling how they were granted by the Holy See. In this connection, he pointed out a tendency which had been noticed on the part of certain Brothers of “considering the payment of fees as something quite normal, and fee-paying schools as preferable to gratuitous schools” (p. 50), a tendency which in the preceding volume (19th -20th century) was mentioned only in connection with the so-called “remunerationists” (see LS 11, 72). Having observed that such a point of view “had had, in certain areas, the deplorable effect of driving away from our primary schools the poor for whom Saint John Baptist de La Salle had founded our Institute”, the Brother Superior continues for a number of lines which deserve to be quoted:

“It is the realisation of this painful fact that, on more than one occasion, has led Brothers to send sad memoranda to our General Chapters, in which some of the best among us wondered, not without some concern, whether the trials which have beset the Institute in these past fifty years or so were not a punishment for a significant departure from our Rules and traditions in the matter of gratuity” (p. 50).

After devoting several pages to demonstrate “the love of Our Lord, of our Holy Church and of St John Baptist de La Salle for the poor”, the Brother Superior writes:

“At the conclusion of this circular, we cannot, it seems to me, avoid asking ourselves whether our ideas regarding the crucial importance of gratuity are correct, clear and complete; in fact, whether they are those of our blessed Father and Founder” (p. 67) and then applies what he has said to various categories of Brothers: Visitors, Directors, Brothers “exercising their apostolate directly among young people” (p. 68).

At the 1934 Chapter, a dozen notes concerned gratuity. Of them, ‘the majority expressed fear that the Institute was straying off course by forgetting the poor and lavishing its care on the rich’ (LS 7, 342). The commission which examined these notes ‘did not believe that the Institute had lost sight of gratuitous schools for the poor’ (id. 342). However, in its report it noted the fear expressed by certain Brothers.

– The actual practice of gratuity

In his circular on gratuity, Brother Adrien recalled that his predecessor Brother Imier “had asked each house to indicate on its December 31st end-of-year returns the number of non fee-paying pupils it had”. He went on to say that “the first returns including this figure were those of 1922, which showed that 120,674 pupils out of a total of 270,190 were non fee-paying. The statistics for January 1932 showed that 156,947 out of a total of 302,733 were non fee-paying” (Circ. 278, 54). These figures showed a slight increase in the number of non fee-paying pupils, including those attending schools funded or subsidised by public authorities. The following figures show how the situation evolved in the years indicated.

Percentage of the total number of pupils who were non fee-paying

| 1929 | 1930 | 1931 | 1932 | 1933 | 1934 | 1935 | 1936 | 1937 | 1938 | 1939 |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 50,17 | 51,00 | 51,84 | 52,45 | 53,20 | 52,62 | 51,14 | 51,12 | 48,20 | 48,49 | 47,73 |

This table shows that initially the percentage tended to rise, and then fell from 1937 onwards. If we take into account current events, especially the economic depression, we

are probably justified in thinking that the situation was relatively satisfactory, at least for the first eight years.

In reality, however, the percentage of “free” pupils is not enough to reflect the true situation in the various Districts. One needs to take into account also the number of Brothers allocated to different kinds of establishments. For example, in 1929, in the District of Paris, there were 100 Brothers in 20 primary schools and 83 Brothers in the boarding school at Froyennes. There was also a tendency, generally speaking, of putting Brothers in classes where gratuity did not apply. The desire to safeguard the principle of gratuity sometimes led to the adoption of unsatisfactory solutions, such as having in the same locality or the same establishment, separate classes for fee-paying and non fee-paying pupils, creating the very real risk of the former treating the latter with contempt.

The teaching of catechism

The growing secularisation of society which had gathered momentum in the last part of the 19th century, especially in France and Italy, had led the Popes, from the beginning of the 20th century onwards, to promote better Christian education of young Catholics by means of a renewal of the teaching of catechism. The Institute contributed to this renewal by the publication of the Catechist’s Manual, in 1907. Renewed interest in what was called “catechism” manifested itself among the Brothers, especially in Italy (see LS 11, 233). Did what was begun in this way persist during the period from 1928 to 1946?

– The importance given in the Institute to the teaching of catechism

In the 1928 and 1934 Chapters there was little mention of the subject. On the face of it, it is difficult to explain this relative silence. In the same way, it is difficult to see why the Superior General, Brother Junien Victor, thought fit to publish in 1938 a circular devoted exclusively to “the catechetical work of the Brother of the Christian Schools”. This circular was based on a report prepared by Brother Alcime Marie (Louis Beyla), Visitor General at the time, and presented to the assembled Superiors during their retreat. One can find various motives for the publication of this circular, in a number of passages. For example, we read, “catechetical pedagogy has not always had a good press...In the last 20 years or so, there has been a vigorous reaction which has tended to rejuvenate catechetical pedagogy...A Brother catechist cannot ignore this movement...” (Circ. 300, p. 58, 59). With a view to stimulating the zeal of the Brothers for the teaching of catechism, and to encourage them to prepare themselves better for this important aspect of their mission, the Superior writes in the introduction, “Think about it careful-

ly, My very dear Brothers, what is essential for us as Christian teachers, is the serious study and the professional teaching of the teaching of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the rest comes after” (p. 6). A rapid analysis of the text will reveal what the situation was in the Institute regarding this question.

In the first part, the text sets out to highlight the importance for the Brother of his role as a catechist. It does this first of all by showing how “the Church, which had instituted, side-by-side with the hierarchy and under its authority, an elite body to which it had entrusted the youngest of its children...had made the Institute part of this body” by the Bull of Approbation. It says also that the Founder of the Brothers speaks of “their work as catechists as a true priesthood, as their own priesthood”. Finally, a brief historical survey shows how the Brothers have always fulfilled this role with zeal, and ends by recalling that, if the foundation of the Institute is part of “a vast apostolic movement to provide basic religious instruction”, “the vocation of catechist delegated to the Brothers of the Christian Schools is more necessary than ever” (p. 24).

The purpose of the second part of the circular is to recall how the Brothers “fulfil their mission as catechists”. Under the heading, “remote preparation of the catechist”, the text dwells on the obligation of studying the catechism prescribed by the Rule, and raises the problem of the “recitation of the catechism”, at least by the younger Brothers. There follows a paragraph devoted to the choice of the best methods for teaching religion. It begins by recalling that the traditional method of the Institute “requires the catechist to have mastered the art of asking questions which lead the child to understand as exactly as possible the text he will subsequently have to commit to memory” (p. 60). Particular importance is attached to the explanation of the meaning of words, because, as the writer judiciously remarks, “dogmatic concepts and moral principles are a foreign language” for children. After reminding the reader about this method which can be called ‘analytical’, the writer turns to the ‘synthetic’ method which consists in “assembling the elements needed to arrive at a formula which constitutes an answer to the catechism question” (p. 66). The author then goes on to speak of “intuitive procedures”. These consist in presenting facts, images and examples from everyday life “by which the teacher calls on the limited experience of his pupils to stimulate their minds and their feelings” (p.73). The catechist is told also to use the blackboard, pictures on the classroom walls, Bible illustrations, and even projected pictures.

Next, the author turns to the question of the “catechism of formation” which, according to the Rule, the Brothers had to do in community, and which was no longer done everywhere. He then speaks of the *catechism lesson* itself. He recalls the need for imme-

ciate preparation for the lesson, as in fact for all lessons, and adds that this preparation should be in writing. As the catechism lesson usually takes place at the end of the day, it is recommended to have a break between it and the preceding lessons devoted to secular subjects. As for the lesson itself, it must fulfil two requirements derived from the fact that “the teaching of religion is at the same time a science and life: a science, because it consists in teaching principles and truths; life, because it is an active principle and an initiation into a way of life...” (p. 98). The circular goes on to speak of a number of special “catechism subjects”. Some had been traditional in the Institute for a long time, such as “catechism on the principal mysteries”, or “Gospel maxims” or “catechism on the liturgy”. Others were more recent in origin, such as catechism on the “social doctrine of the Church”, on St John Baptist de La Salle, or on “Catholic Action and the Missions”.

Finally, the Brothers are invited to form “teams of volunteer catechists”. Since the apostolic work of these catechists was a form of Catholic Action, the author of the report concludes that “Christian schools and their associations for former students provide an apprenticeship for the lay apostolate” (p. 119). The conclusion seeks above all to stress that “prayer and union with God are at the very heart of catechetical work” (p. 128). The text was complemented by a series of appendices.

While careful to preserve the heritage of the past, the circular did not ignore the new situation in which the Brothers found themselves, and was open to more recent methods. It has to be added, however, that the circular concerned itself above all with the teaching of catechism to young children. Apart from referring to some particular forms of this teaching more suitable for older pupils, the circular does not deal with teaching religion to these pupils. And yet, at the 1934 Chapter, a request had been made for an intermediate and an advanced catechism textbook (*Cours Moyen and Cours Supérieur*) to be published for classes for these older pupils. But, even in the case of younger children, the fact that religious education was restricted to a form based above all on the explanation of a text meant to be learnt by heart, brought with it the risk that it was restricted, where religious teaching was concerned, to the knowledge of ready-made formulas to the detriment of a much more profound understanding.

In the same way, where the catechetical formation provided for the Brothers was concerned - a subject also treated in the circular - the approach adopted in the *Cours Moyen* ran the risk of restricting the Brothers to knowledge based too much on books. The course books on Dogma, Moral and Worship all consisted of series of questions, and of answers which, in theory, had to be memorised in preparation for the end-of-year examination.

– The pursuit of the catechetical apostolate in the Institute

The Brothers continued to teach catechism to their pupils in all their classes. Non-Christians could be exempted, however, at the request of their parents, and in Greece, “Orthodox” teachers taught catechism to those of their faith. The circular provided real encouragement for Brothers who sought to be real “apostles of the catechism”. Many *Notices nécrologiques* speak of such zeal in the lives of the Brothers they describe. The circular also served as a stimulus for Brothers who had grown lax in their catechetical work. Visit-reports sometimes noted shortcomings in this area.

The catechetical work of the Brothers was not restricted, however, to their pupils. It took also other forms, especially in some countries. The first of these forms was advocated in Circular 300 which invited the Brothers to form “teams of volunteer catechists”. The *Institute Bulletin* in the years preceding the Second World War lists places where this was done: Lima, Peru (April 1933); Rheims (id.); Cucuta and Zapatoca, Colombia (October 1935 and April 1936); Turin (January 1936); Havana, Cuba (id.); Panama (id.); Ciudad Trujillo, Santo Domingo. Of the groups created, one deserves a special mention: the Union of Catechists of Jesus Crucified and Mary Immaculate, founded in Turin by Brother Teodoro, and approved by the local bishop in 1926.

To extend the influence of the Institute’s catechetical work to a wider audience, the Brothers also published revues, such as *La Salle Catechist*, in the USA, in 1934, and *Sussidi*, in Italy, in 1936. In Canada, Catechetical Weeks were organised; in Sainte Foy, in the District of Quebec, a document resource centre was opened in 1940. Books on the teaching of catechism composed by Brothers were published by “Procures” in various countries. For example, between 1934 and 1946, 70 were published in Italy. Catechetical material, such as films and pictures, were produced by some Brothers. In various countries, Brothers not only attended congresses and courses, but some were asked to organise them or contribute to them as speakers. In 1942, a joint catechetical commission was set up by the two Districts of Italy. Also in Italy, from 1929, a Brother had held the position of religious education inspector for State schools. Overall, one can say that, in the Institute, zeal for the teaching of catechism, if not for all, but at least for many Brothers, was still strong.

Catholic Action

The Institute endeavoured to respond to the appeal of Pope Pius XI regarding Catholic Action. This response was most noticeable after the 1934 Chapter and the elec-

tion of Brother Junien Victor as Superior General. The impetus given during the mandate of this Superior was not weakened by the Second World War.

– The place of Catholic Action in the Institute

In the 1934 Chapter, the commission for schools and boarding schools, inspired by the “memoranda” it had studied, said in its report, “our role as Brothers of the Christian Schools...should be to imbue our pupils with the doctrine and mentality of Catholic action, to enroll them in specialised groups where they can act, and induce them, in school and especially during the holidays, to act on their companions, and be apostles” (GA ED 237/7).

Brother Junien Victor gave proof of the of the importance he attached to Catholic Action by bringing to the attention of the Institute, in circular 297, a report that had been presented on this subject at the end of the retreat for Superiors in 1937. As the Superior said to the Brothers in a brief introduction to this report, drawn up by Brother Alcime Marie, Director of the second novitiate at the time, “you will find here a very serious and well-documented exposition of a subject to which the Sovereign Pontiff has, on many an occasion, drawn the attention of pastors and faithful and especially of Christian educators” (p. 3).

In the first part, the circular speaks of Catholic Action in general. It begins with the definition given by Pius XI, “the participation of lay people in the apostolate of the hierarchy”, in order to show that, while the apostolate required of the “ordinary faithful” has to “emanate from the hierarchy”, it results from their incorporation in Christ by baptism. In the same way, according to the first encyclical of Pope Pius XI, *Ubi Arcano Dei*, Catholic Action is shown to be indissolubly linked to the restoration of Christ’s Kingdom. It is therefore necessary for the Church. And the text adds, “the importance of the apostolate of the faithful by the faithful explains the urgent need for its organisation at the present time” (p. 12). Elsewhere we read that what characterises Catholic Action is both its “unity of direction” and its “specialisation” which adapts the movement to different social settings.

The second part is entitled “Catholic Action and teaching religious”. We read that “teaching religious are called upon to become part of the Catholic Action movement, not only by acquiring a theoretical understanding of this apostolic doctrine, but by endeavouring to initiate their pupils into the methods of Catholic Action”. (p. 17). This idea is briefly developed.

Next, three paragraphs are devoted to showing how Brothers can initiate others into Catholic Action in the different areas where they work:

– *In the primary school.* According to the circular, “initiation into Catholic Action in the primary school is not seen as anything new by teachers aware of their mission. Christian teachers have always urged good pupils to do good to their companions”. By intensifying this practice, the Brothers of the Christian Schools will be promoters of Catholic Action (p. 18).

– *In secondary and technical schools.* This paragraph aims to show how the approach of the JEC (Catholic Students’ Association) is suitable for these types of establishments. This is because “even in Catholic secondary schools, the JEC has a group-role to play. Its role there is not, as in secular schools, to make inroads into a pagan setting, but to act as leaven where apathy prevails...” (id. 26). If “the militant ‘makes his brothers Christian again’, in the meantime, he exercises an influence in the school which for him is a novitiate for real Catholic Action” (p. 27).

– *In associations for former students.* As the author of the report says, “An army of 141,458 soldiers: that is the imposing number of persons our associations for former students place at the disposal of the ‘apostolate of the hierarchy’” (p. 34). No doubt, well-run pious associations are not unrelated to the Catholic Action movement but, for all that, they are not a form of Catholic Action. Should they be abandoned on this account? The answer given is that “pious associations and the Catholic Action movement are both necessary” (p. 36). And so, while the teams of volunteer catechists have an apostolate in its own right, “in our secularised society, they constitute an excellent form of Catholic Action which corresponds exactly with the desires of the Holy Father regarding the re-Christianisation of society” (p. 39). Likewise, “Catholic Action militants, mostly our former students, can adopt also other forms of apostolate recognised and recommended by ecclesiastical authorities”. The fact remains that “these different forms of Catholic apostolate are auxiliaries of Catholic Action, but not Catholic Action itself” (p. 40).

In the last part, the circular turns to the place of Catholic Action in the “professional formation and the life of the Brothers”. It states that aspirants should come into contact with Catholic Action, at least on the theoretical level, as early as the junior novitiate; that their catechism manual should contain explanations of Catholic Action; that in communities, the Brother Director, by means of reading in the refectory should inform the Brothers about Catholic Action, and arouse their interest in specialised groups connected in some way with the school or its former student association; that the Brother Visitor

should “work with the Brother Directors to promote the Catholic Action movement in all the schools” (p.41).

This exposition reveals a thorough knowledge, at least on the theoretical level, of how Catholic Action was envisaged at the time. In particular, the author seems to have assimilated the doctrinal basis on which Pope Pius XI based his teaching on this subject. One thing that is striking about the author, however, is that he thinks that, while a person can use or base himself on methods proper to Catholic Action in schools or in associations for former students, to train ‘militants’ for Catholic Action movements, does not really constitute Catholic Action.

– Contribution of the Brothers to Catholic Action

In reality, despite these reservations, some Brothers did actually run Catholic Action groups. For example, in **France**:

– In primary schools, on non-school days, the Brothers organised youth club activities, and had meetings for children belonging to “Cœurs Vaillants” (Brave Hearts) groups, which took their name from an illustrated magazine intended to help the running of groups according to the spirit of Catholic Action.

– In secondary schools, there were JEC groups. As the circular pointed out, these were groups of adolescents or young men who applied the methods of Catholic Action to the school setting.

– In establishments providing vocational training, students formed groups belonging to the JOC (Young Christian Workers) movement. Younger students joined what can be called pre-JOC groups.

In **Italy**, a scheme was set up to tailor Catholic Action groups to specific age groups in educational establishments. A “Report on the current organisation of internal Catholic Action groups” (GA ND 201/16) shows that pupils are allocated to groups as follows:

- *Fanciulli cattolici*: for pupils in the first three years of primary school.
- *Aspiranti minori*: for pupils in the last two years of primary school.
- *Aspiranti maggiori*: for pupils in the lower and intermediate classes of secondary schools.
- *Effettivi*: for pupils in the senior classes of secondary schools.

From information from a variety of sources, the following picture emerges:

- In **Belgium**, among the pious associations available for pupils there were Catholic Action groups (GA NG 270). An agreement had been made between the Brothers and Catholic Action movements (cf. GA EE 285-2/6).
- In **Canada**, according to Nive Voisine, a number of Brothers were deeply involved in Catholic Action movements, JEC and, above all, in the Eucharistic Crusade.
- In the District of **Panama**, the Brothers ran pious associations that were traditional in their country of origin. In the 1940s, they opened a *Centro de Accion Catolica (La Salle en el Istmo Centroamerica)*.
- In the District of **Antilles-Mexico**, Catholic Action groups were organised which distinguished themselves by their apostolic work (GA NF 111-1/21).
- In the District of **Peru-Bolivia**, Catholic Action groups replaced the traditional confraternities of the Holy Child Jesus and of the Most Blessed Virgin (GA NT 500/2).

The *Institute Bulletin* sometimes carried reports on what was being done in Brothers' establishments, or to introduce young people in formation to Catholic Action. For example:

- in June 1934, in an article on Catholic Action and the Laity, it is said that 'teachers in Christian schools should not allow pupils to remain ignorant of what Catholic Action is, and what is meant by laity, (p. 158).
- in April 1937, an article reports that the Superiors of the scholasticate at Glencoe (United States) made a decision to take advantage of the holidays to introduce their students to Catholic Action (p. 188).
- in October 1937, there is mention of a "Catholic Action Exhibition" at the Passy-Froyennes boarding school. Another article speaks of Catholic Action groups formed by former students of the Brothers in Santiago de Cuba (p. 363).

The contribution of the Brothers to the development of the Catholic Action movement was sometimes ambiguous, however. For example, sometimes traditional "pious associations" set up to train "elite groups" were considered to be forms of Catholic Action, whereas the latter specialised, depending on circumstances, in different "mass movements".

But above all, it seems that when Catholic Action groups existed in Brothers' establishments, they encountered a certain number of difficulties in their relations with the

governing bodies of these quite highly structured movements. At least, this is what one can deduce from a note written, no doubt, some time after the Second World War, which the Brother Secretary General sent to the Brother Visitors of France, and which speaks of the tension existing between the Brothers and the parish clergy over “Coeurs Vaillants” groups. There was a problem also in some middle schools known as “cours complementaires” in which the JEC did not seem to fit in. As for vocational courses, an agreement with the JOC was mentioned to ensure “it kept its distinctive character”. The note spoke also of the question of training Brothers for Catholic Action. It recommended junior novitiates to take their inspiration from Catholic Action methods; that scholastics be introduced to the subject “by information lessons given by Brothers or ecclesiastical leaders of the various movements” (GA EE 285-2/6); that Brothers considered to be suitable be sent on training courses; and even that courses for Brothers only be organised. In Italy, there was a conflict between Church Catholic Action organisations and the Brothers regarding Catholic Action in their schools. In the 1946 Chapter, a long report on Catholic Action would return to the problems posed by Catholic Action in the Institute and would recommend a number of solutions.

Conclusion

What has been said about gratuity, catechism and Catholic Action reflects the situation of the Institute in a period which, as far as the Institute was concerned, still had close links with the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th, but which, at the same time, was marked by events and changes in mentality which transformed the world in which it existed.

Attachment to gratuity reflected a desire to be faithful to one of the major aspects of the Brothers’ vocation - teaching the poor. At the same time, one feels the Brothers had a somewhat uneasy conscience because they were no longer able to act as they would like. In reality, standing by too narrow an interpretation of respect for gratuity, seen as a means of reaching the poor, prevented the Brothers from seeing the disadvantage there was of establishing too ‘automatic’ a connection between the two. For example, the possibility of admitting all pupils gratuitously was not enough, unless one was careful, to guarantee that preference was given to poor pupils. Or, obstacles encountered in the pursuit of gratuity could serve as an easy alibi for not trying to, at least, make it possible for pupils of modest means to attend all types of establishments.

Regarding the teaching of catechism, the circular, while maintaining the method inherited from the Founder of the Institute, advocated the use of more recent methods.

This was a step forward, therefore. But this encouraged the Brothers to think in terms only of teaching religion to young children, at a time when more and more Brothers were working with adolescents and young men. And so, this circular which arrived at an opportune moment to relaunch and bring up-to-date the catechetical apostolate of the Brothers, failed to achieve its aim, at least, partly.

Interest in Catholic Action in the Institute arose from genuine apostolic concern. Brothers tried to introduce it in their schools or among former pupils. The commitment of some to Catholic Action extended also to other areas, such as politics, social concerns or trade unions. All the same, it has to be said that the Institute found it difficult to integrate this new form of apostolate. There was a difficulty in reconciling certain consequences for Brothers becoming involved in Catholic Action movements - for example, taking part in courses and camps - and a very strict way of envisaging community life. Also, Brothers did not always find a way of applying the methods of Catholic Action in school. Perhaps they did not understand its specific nature. We have to bear in mind also the difficulty of establishing the relations desired with very structured movements very dependent on the clergy, even if what is involved is a lay apostolate!

Chapter 4 - THE INSTITUTE DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR AND IN THE IMMEDIATE POST-WAR PERIOD (1939-1946)

Introduction

The war which had existed in embryonic form in the conflicts between opposing nations, particularly in Europe, finally broke out in 1939. It spread progressively to an increasing number of nations, especially from 1941 onwards, when Japan extended the conflict to the Far East. The war lasted until 1945. The end of the war brought with it new changes in the world order.

This war inevitably had repercussions on the Institute, in particular in the countries which had taken part in it. A relatively large number of Brothers were personally involved in the war.

The Institute in countries at war

As the war spread, it progressively affected more and more the countries in which the Institute was present. It continued to affect these countries when it came to an end and in the years that immediately followed.

– Beginnings of the war in Europe (1939)

On March 15th 1939, German troops invaded Czechoslovakia. The Sudeten region was annexed by the *Reich*, and Bohemia-Moravia were placed under a German Protectorate. As a result, the boarding school in Prague was requisitioned, and the teacher training college at St Yvan could no longer take in new students - it would be closed in 1940. On September 1st, Poland was attacked by Germany. The Brothers' houses at Czestochowa and Lisków were in the area invaded by the Germans, while the one at Lwów was in the area invaded by the Russians. The orphans in Lisków were taken away to Germany to work, and so as not to abandon them, Brother Wojciech Marjan accompanied them.

Following the declaration of war on September 3rd, Brothers of conscription age in France were mobilised. Large schools were requisitioned to serve as hospitals. Others reopened with the help of a greater number of lay teachers. Brothers in Great Britain were not affected by conscription. Those with vows were exempted as being *ministers of religion* (cf. GA NA 100/8).

– Extension of the war in Europe (1940-1942)

In April 1940, Germany invaded Denmark and Norway. Above all, on May 10th 1940, German troops launched their offensive against France, and overran Holland, Belgium and Luxembourg. In these three countries, the German invasion caused damage to a certain number of establishments. In Belgium, the French houses established on the frontier moved back to France. The formation groups of the two Districts joined the population fleeing to France. Brothers between the ages of 25 and 45 were mobilised as stretcher-carriers, but most were able to return to their communities after a short while. Some were made prisoners but were rapidly set free.

In France, the extension of the German offensive led the Brothers in the north and northeast of the country to move and to accompany formation groups to the centre or south of the country. Some schools were damaged. Some Brothers among the retreating soldiers were killed in the fighting, and others were made prisoner. After the defeat and the subsequent signing of the armistice on June 25th 1940, Alsace and the *département* of the Moselle were once again annexed by Germany; the Brothers' schools in the Moselle were closed and the Brothers expelled. The division of the country into several zones made communication difficult. This caused problems for the Brothers, although some, like other people, took the risk to move illegally from one zone to another.

Great Britain, the only country continuing to resist Germany, also came under pressure. Towns in particular were subjected to incessant bombardment. With the exception of the house in Dover, none of the Brothers' establishments suffered serious damage. The formation groups were moved from the island of Guernsey to England (GA NA 100/11). The island of Malta, in the Mediterranean - a British possession - was subjected to intense bombardment, but the Brothers' establishments were spared.

On June 10th, Italy entered the war on the side of Germany. As a result, the Brother Superior and several Assistants moved to Mauléon (District of Bayonne), and the buildings of the Mother House in Rome were requisitioned to serve as a military hospital. Italy attacked Greece at the beginning of Autumn 1940. In the Spring of 1941, German troops also invaded Greece. The military occupation of the Brothers' establishments in Thessalonika and Piraeus prevented them from functioning properly. Because of the current situation, recruitment to these establishments and to the school in Syra suffered considerably (GA NH 601-2/19). Italian Brothers in Patras and Corfu were arrested and then forced to return to their own country by way of Serbia. In 1941, the Brothers returned to Patras.

On June 22nd 1941, Germany attacked the Soviet Union. It attacked also Romania and Bulgaria, where the Brothers' establishment in Sofia suffered some damage from bombardment.

– **Extension of the war to the Far East (1941-1942)**

On December 7th 1941, the Japanese destroyed the base at Pearl Harbour on the island of Hawaii, and by doing so declared war on the United States. At the same time, they attacked British possessions in Southeast Asia, and the Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia).

In the United States, where the population had hoped to be spared by the conflict, the Japanese attack was keenly felt, but the country's subsequent war-effort was considerable. Student numbers dropped considerably in the Brothers' university colleges because of conscription. The Brothers, on the other hand, were exempted from it by a decree of Congress in September 1940. The Brothers' establishments were made available to the government for the training of army and naval recruits. Intensive courses were run for adults in such subjects as aeronautics, navigation and electronics. The number of students rose in the seven military academies run by the Brothers, and an eighth academy was opened in Kansas City (cf. Battersby *The Brothers in the United States 1925-1950*, 246, 247).

There had been Canadian Brothers in Japan since 1932. When Japan declared war, the Brothers at Sendai were arrested and interned. A German Brother was the only one to remain free. He was subsequently wounded in a bombing attack on the town in July 1942. Two of the interned Brothers benefitted from an exchange of prisoners. Other Brothers were in Mandchukuo, a Japanese dependency. In December 1941, the Brothers in Kirin and Mukden were interned with other religious. As those over 50 years of age were released, one of the Brothers benefitted from this provision in July 1942. In view of an exchange of prisoners, certain other Brothers went to Yokohama in Japan. The exchange did not take place, and they were interned again, first in the town, and later in the mountains near the town. The three who remained in Manchuria suffered deprivation in the camp where they were interned. Brother Marie Liguori (Louis Trépanier), Director of the community in Mukden and auxiliary Visitor since February 1941, died in October 1943 at the age of 46.

As the Philippines were not affected initially by the war, thirteen German Brothers who were on British territory in Southeast Asia, had been sent to Manila. When Japan declared war on the United States, these Brothers were arrested, but were soon released.

When Manila fell to Japanese troops on January 2nd 1942, it was the American Brothers in the community who were interned successively in different places. On January 5th, Japanese soldiers occupied the north wing of the Brothers' establishment, leaving the rest to them. On the 10th, the Brother Director Egbert Xavier (William Kelly), who wished to maintain the presence of the Brothers there, presented a list of 14 grievances to the commanding officer of the Japanese detachment. Some of the answers he received clearly reflect the thinking of the occupying forces. In his capacity as president of the Catholic Education Association, this Brother Director also asked for the re-opening of Catholic schools. Where he was concerned, he was able to re-open his school in September 1942, but in another place and under the name of The Christian Brothers' Academy.

British possessions in Southeast Asia were also overrun by the Japanese. In December 1941, they occupied Malaysia and Singapore. The Brothers there did not want to abandon the people they served. Those with British nationality or belonging to allied nations were sent to internment camps. Other Brothers who remained free lacked resources, their schools having been closed down. However, primary schools where Japanese was taught were authorised, and a number of local Brothers learned the language and obtained the necessary qualifications. Their salaries helped the Brothers as a whole to survive.

In Burma, at the beginning of the war, Brothers from central Europe were arrested and sent to an internment camp in India. When the Japanese occupied the country at the beginning of 1942, the Brothers' schools were taken over. The orphanage at Twante was destroyed. Brothers were arrested, and several did not survive because of privations. In Hong Kong, the Brothers' school there and in Kowloon were damaged by the Japanese attack. An American Brother was killed as he was driving an ambulance. After finding shelter in various places, the Brothers, apart from three from Ireland, went to find refuge with their fellow Brothers in Indochina (Circ. 314).

– Continuation and end of the war (1943-1945)

The war continued on all fronts with its countless deaths and destruction. In countries invaded by the powers of the Berlin-Rome-Tokyo axis, resistance against the occupying forces gained strength and brought with it reprisals; and the population suffered from the restrictions imposed on it. The opposing nations felt the effects of the war effort demanded of them. In Great Britain, above all, the population were subjected to frequent bombardment. Everywhere, the Brothers shared the same conditions as the local population. Between November 1942 and February 1943, a turning-point in the

war was reached. From this moment, the situation gradually changed until the war ended.

In Europe and on the western front

In Africa, the Italian Brothers had had to leave Addis Abeba at the end of May 1942 when Ethiopia was retaken by the Allies. In Italy, the allied landing in Sicily in July 1943 resulted in the overthrow of the fascist regime and the signing of an armistice between the Italians and the Allies on September 8th 1943. The German troops, however, continued to resist. A number of Brothers' houses were damaged by bombs. During the difficult allied advance on Rome following a number of allied landings between September 1943 and January 1944, the house of formation at Albano was destroyed. After the liberation of Rome, the Generalate became an English military hospital (Circ. 315).

In France, following the allied landing in Normandy on June 6th 1944, a number of Brothers' houses were damaged in the fighting and by bombing raids. This was the case also in other parts of the country as it was progressively liberated. During the course of the war, according to circular 315, dated February 11th 1945, 11 houses were completely destroyed and 38 seriously damaged. In Lorraine, the boarding school at Metz, which the Brothers had had to leave in 1940, was in need of extensive repair; and the orphanage at Guénange was in a lamentable state (Circ.315). Belgium too was liberated. In December 1944 and January 1945, the final German offensive in the west ground to a halt close to the house of formation at Ciney. All in all, in Belgium, 4 establishments were destroyed, 6 were seriously damaged, and 12 were turned into hospitals (Circ. 315). The Netherlands remained occupied for a long time

Allied troops reached Germany and Austria at the beginning of 1945. Hitler mobilised whatever troops he could find: elderly Brothers were called up. When Germany surrendered on May 8th 1945, the two countries were divided up into 4 occupied military zones. In 1945, the German and Austrian Brothers took back some of their establishments, but 40 or so of them who were soldiers were still prisoners of war.

In Europe and on the eastern front

In the middle of 1943, Soviet troops began the reconquest of their territory. In the course of 1944, they fought their way across the countries of eastern and central Europe. As for the Institute in Romania, Hungary and Slovakia, the Brothers' schools which had continued to function during the war, were now uncertain what the morrow would

bring once the Soviet troops arrived. The same was true of Poland where, during the war, the Brothers had maintained two communities in Czestochowa. The house in Zagreb in Yugoslavia disappeared. The eastern part of Germany and Austria were overrun by the Red Army, which occupied the house in Strebersdorf and Maria Laubegg in Vienna.

In Bulgaria, the school in Sofia was spared when the Russian troops arrived: they occupied it, and the pupils were transferred to a school run by Sisters. In Greece, the Brothers belonging to the District of Istanbul had been in a precarious situation since the invasion of the country by the Italians and the Germans. A number of them had died because of the privations. After the liberation of the country in January 1945, the school at Salonika, which had been the command-centre of the German army, was now able to resume functioning on its own premises again. The Italian Brothers in Patras had been recalled by the Brother Assistant in 1943, but the armistice signed on September 7th obliged them to remain. They joined the Brothers at Piraeus, and then in January 1944, they returned to Patras. They finally left this town for good in June 1945 (cf. GA NG 516/1 - *Historique*).

In the Far East

The counter-offensive of the Allies had begun at the beginning of 1943, and had gained momentum by the end of the year. One of their objectives was to attack Japan itself, but only following the reconquest of the Philippines. The Americans progressively drew closer to the Philippines and then launched their attack in October 1944. At the beginning of 1945, their army occupied the north part of the island of Luzon. The prospect of defeat and the fear of guerilla warfare made the Japanese troops particularly aggressive. On February 1st, as American troops closed in on Manila, the commander of the Japanese detachment asked the Brother Director to evacuate the part of the building occupied by the Brothers and civilians who had taken refuge there through fear of bombardment. The Brother Director refused. Two days later, he and a judge who had taken refuge in the school, were arrested and were certainly executed by the Japanese. Their bodies were never found. On February 12th, after lunch, an officer and some soldiers came to check whether guerilla fighters had infiltrated the part of the building not occupied by the soldiers. A Brother who spoke Japanese tried to reassure them. But the officer returned with 20 soldiers who set about massacring the Brothers and the civilians sheltering there. Even though the soldiers had been told that some of the Brothers were German, 15 of them were killed together with 25 civilians. When American soldiers arrived at the school, they saved one Brother and 26 civilians who had escaped notice.

The motive for this massacre does not seem to have been a religious one. The massacre is more likely to have been one of the many atrocities perpetrated at that time by Japanese troops in the Philippines. The interned American Brothers were released on February 23rd 1945.

From March onwards, the American army continued to draw closer to Japan and carried out mass bombing raids on towns in the South, but Japan showed no sign of weakening. Finally the launching of an atomic bomb brought about the surrender of Japan. On August 4th, all interned foreigners were officially freed. The Canadian Brothers interned near Yokohama were looked after by the American navy. Those who were still in detention camps in Manchuria were abandoned by their guards who fled at the approach of Russian troops.

Brothers interned in various parts of Southeast Asia were freed progressively as the Japanese occupation came to an end. This was the case in Burma which was liberated in September 1945, and in Malaysia where schools rapidly began functioning again

In French Indochina (now Vietnam), the Japanese who had invaded a part of neighbouring China, imposed the presence of their troops on the French authorities in 1940. French sovereignty remained in place, but the Japanese military authorities assumed certain rights and encouraged clandestine national maquis groups. The Brothers' main schools were occupied by the Japanese army, otherwise, initially, the situation did not cause the Brothers too many problems. From 1943 onwards, schools were closed down in the North because of the risk of bombardment from China. On March 9th 1945, the Japanese put an end to the French administration. From this time onwards, the situation became more difficult. This continued to be the case after the capitulation of Japan: its troops remained in Indochina. The nationalist Viet-Minh maquis became increasingly threatening. To counter this threat, on December 1st 1945, the Brothers and the formation groups in Nhatrang moved to a zone further North which was considered safer. But the French Brothers who returned to the house in Nhatrang were led away by the Viet-Minh and detained. They were freed by the French navy (cf. Circ 317).

Two Brothers from England had been sent to Saigon as a preparation for going to China. When they left Indochina by boat they were arrested by the Japanese and put in a detention camp. They escaped, but one of them, Brother Celsus Edwin (Desmond McCarthy) was recaptured, and the second, Brother Thomas More (Richard Todd) and his companions were discovered by the Japanese, wandering in the jungle, and were killed on July 1st 1945.

– Other countries during the war

The island of **Ceylon** (Sri Lanka) was spared by the conflict. However, the Brothers feared, as did the population, a Japanese invasion and the threat of aerial bombardments. This led them to close their schools and transfer their teaching to camps opened for refugees from the towns (GA NH 401/14).

Another country, **Australia**, faced the threat of a Japanese invasion for a long time. With the rest of the population, the Brothers suffered from the shortages and restrictions of a country all of whose resources were taken up by the war effort. The ecclesiastical authorities had obtained for the Brothers the exemption from military service contained in the Defense Act of 1903-1939. Because of the risk of invasion, plans had been drawn up for the house at Oakhill to become a hospital annexe. As a consequence, the teachers and pupils of the college were evacuated, but they returned in 1943. While the war slowed down the extension planned in Malvern, it did not prevent the Brothers taking charge of an institution called *Boys Town* at Engadine, in September 1942.

Canada entered the war at the side of Great Britain in 1939 and contributed greatly to the war effort. Even if this brought back prosperity, the Brothers were affected by a reduction in salaries followed by an increase in the cost of living. As they were exempt from military service, the crisis which shook the country regarding it did not concern them. At the end of the war, the Canadian Brothers showed very great generosity to their fellow Brothers in Europe and Asia by sending them numerous parcels.

In other countries untouched by the war, the Brothers were still affected by its consequences. The Districts of the Near East and Egypt lost their French Brothers who were called up at the beginning of the war. It was the same in North Africa and Madagascar-La Réunion. During the war, Brothers in these Districts, in particular, in that of Egypt, were not able to escape completely from the tension created by the rivalry for influence between the French Vichy government and the leaders of "*France Libre*" in London, and later in Algiers.

Brothers involved in the war

In the 1914-1918 War, Brothers from different countries had been obliged to take part in it. This was true also of the Second World War, but in the latter war, the Brothers were involved in a greater variety of ways.

Information concerning the Brothers in France and in other countries who were involved in the 1939-1945 War has been gathered by Brother Pierre Macheboeuf (Henri Marie) of the former District of Clermont. When he was 21, he himself was arrested and sent to a concentration camp in Germany with the other Brothers of his community at Murat in the same District. The information he has gathered is contained in 6 booklets (21 x 29.7). The figures given do not always correspond, but they have the merit of providing a basis to work on. Besides providing figures, these booklets contain first-hand accounts by the Brothers involved in the events reported in them.

– Brothers called up to serve in the army

Brothers were called up to serve in various armies participating in the war. When they found themselves on opposing sides, they espoused the cause of their country and fulfilled their duty conscientiously. They all experienced the same conditions: being apart from their family and community, being exposed to danger in armed conflict, etc. The situation was particularly difficult for German and Austrian soldiers fighting on the Russian front. In France and in Poland, German and Austrian Brothers were welcomed in communities. At the 1946 Chapter, a German capitulant bore witness to this. French Brothers serving in the occupation forces in Germany at the end of the war, received a similar welcome.

The fate of the Brothers serving in the war varied: some survived unharmed, others were wounded or killed. A certain number were made prisoners. For these latter, life was particularly hard in the camps. It was better for those who worked in rural areas; friendships were even formed with the local population.

The following table will give us some idea of the number of Brothers involved in these different situations, even if the numbers given are not all absolutely accurate. The table is based on the figures given by Brother Macheboeuf (booklet 1, 3). Figures given in brackets come from other sources.

| | Called up | Killed | Disappeared | Prisoners |
|-------------------|-----------|--------|-------------|-----------|
| French District | 1.043 | 18 | - | (246) |
| Mission Districts | 75 | (2) | - | ? |
| Other Districts | 270 | (53) | (8) | ? |
| TOTAL | 1.388 | 73 | (8) | (297) |

20th CENTURY (1928 - 1946)

N.B.: *Called up:* In the figure of 75 given for missionary countries, are the Czech and Polish Brothers called up in France or in the Middle East included? It seems, according to another source, that the figure of 270 refers to Brothers from Germany and Austria. If this true, the number of Belgian Brothers serving as stretcher bearers has not been included.

Killed: this is the total given by circular 318, dated July 17th 1946. The figure of 53 corresponds to the number of German and Austrian Brothers reported by their Districts after the war as *gefallen* (fallen).

Disappeared: that is, those whose death has not been proved. The 8 referred to are German. Were there others also?

Prisoners: this is the total given by circular 318. The figure of 246 given for the French Districts leaves a relatively small number to cover those from other Districts, in particular, from Germany and Austria.

– Brothers involved in the Resistance

Because of the occupation of their country by enemy forces, some Brothers thought it their duty to take part in the Resistance movement. The activity of these Brothers often took the form, first of all, of helping escaped prisoners who, in France, were trying to cross into the unoccupied part of the country; or of persons wishing either to cross into the other zone, or to cross the frontier into Spain. Some Brothers belonged to networks which communicated information to the Allied forces, or which were involved in sabotage, or perhaps, even took part in military action led by the so-called “*maquis*”. It is difficult to know how many Brothers took part in such action which, by definition, was secret. Brother Macheboeuf mentions 48 who were held captive for a period ranging from a few days to several months.

Brothers were involved in such action, especially in France. In Belgium, several were involved in the Resistance and for this reason were deported or sent to concentration camps. There were others in other countries, but no information is available about them. It seems that Brother Egbert Xavier, Director of the house in Manila, was executed by the Japanese because he was suspected of helping the guerrilla forces. He had, at least, helped prisoners of war.

– Brothers detained in concentration or internment camps

Of the Brothers who took part in military action by the Resistance, several were sent to *concentration camps* organised by the Nazis. Other, however, were sent there in reprisal for actions in which they had not been involved. Among those deported for this reason, there were 17 French Brothers, 8 of whom were from the community in Murat who were

sent to Germany with other hostages from that town. Seven Belgian Brothers and at least one German, one Czech and one Hungarian Brother were sent to concentration camps. We know that one Polish Brother was killed in one. Several of those who survived these camps have described the inhuman conditions they endured there. They have described also the marvellous ingenuity they had recourse to in order to defy the prohibition to practise their religion, or help their fellow sufferers.

In the first part of this chapter we mentioned, a number of times, Brothers who were sent to internment camps because they belonged to countries which were at war with the one in which they were, or with that of the occupying forces. There is no reason to add anything to what was said previously on this topic. We can add, however, that other Brothers also suffered this fate. For example, in France, at the beginning of the war, some German Brothers were interned. Later it was the turn of Brothers from Great Britain or Malta who were detained at Saint-Denis, near Paris. It was the same in Egypt and the Middle East, where German or Austrian Brothers were interned. Life in these internment camps could be as hard as in concentration camps. Perhaps it is for this reason that circular 318, which we have already quoted, gives the overall number of deported Brothers as 106.

– **Brothers forced to work abroad (S.T.O.)**

In order to find workers needed by their country for their armament factories, the German authorities obliged young people in the countries they occupied to do forced labour as part of the S.T.O., the *Service du Travail Obligatoire* (Forced Labour Service). Among the French Brothers obliged to do this work, there were those who accepted to do so. Others, however, evaded the obligation, particularly in the Districts of Rheims, Quimper and Marseilles where, with the backing of their Brother Visitors, all the Brothers liable for this service were “refractory”.

– **Examples of humanitarian aid**

From what we have been able to discover, a number of Brothers helped to save Jewish children and adults from the Nazis. In the case of France, a table drawn up by Brother Macheboeuf, based on information gathered by the Secretary General of the Institute in 1945, gives the figure of 127 under the heading “Jews” in connection with four Districts. Another figure given for three of the same Districts and a fourth, which is different, is 155. The difference we note here highlights the difficulty of establishing the exact figures, as well as calculating how many of those saved were children, and how many adults. Four

of the Brothers involved have been awarded the title of “Just among the Nations”, and their name has been inscribed on the Wall of Remembrance at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem.

Brothers victims of the war

A number of Brothers died as a result of the war. The data provided by Brother Macheboeuf, adjusted by the figures given in brackets, enable us to arrive at a total, even if it is incomplete. The victims listed in the column under the heading ‘Missions’ are the 15 Brothers massacred in Manila and their Director.

| Nationality | In Combat | Prisoners & STO | Deported Interned | Executed | Air Raid & Mines | Missions | Total |
|---------------|----------------|--------------------|----------------------|----------------|---------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| German/Austr. | 52 (+1) | - | 1 | 2 | 5 | 12 | 72 (+1) |
| French | 18 | 12 | 4 | 2 | 7 (+2) | - | 43 (+2) |
| Belgian | - | - | 4 | 4 | 5 | - | 13 |
| Italian | 1 | - | - | - | 4 | - | 5 |
| Irish | - | - | - | - | - | 4 (-2) | 4 (-2) |
| British | - | - | - | (1) | - | - | (1) |
| Polish | - | - | (1) | 2 | - | - | 2 (+1) |
| Hungarian | - | - | 1 | - | - | 2 (-1) | 3 (-1) |
| Czech | (2) | - | 1 | - | - | (1) | 1 (+3) |
| American | - | - | - | - | (1) | - | (1) |
| Canadians | - | - | (1) | - | - | - | (1) |
| TOTAL | 71 (+3) | 12 | 11 (+2) | 10 (+1) | 21 (+3) | 18 (-2) | 143 (+7) |

In Italy, the Brothers responded to the call of Pope Pius XII to religious to hide Jews threatened with deportation. The Brothers in Rome hid 96 persons. In Poland, at the beginning of the war, the Brothers in Czestochowa “freed a Jewish teacher and his sister” (GA NB 500). They also hid teachers and opened a clandestine school. In Belgium, boarders were listed under false names, no doubt to protect them, but we do not know for what reason.

Because of their position, the Brothers had the possibility of alleviating the effects of the war on the local population. We do not know all that they did, but at least we can

give some examples. Brother Mizukami (Romuald Oscar), the first Japanese to join the Institute, had been sent to Indochina to make his novitiate. He was still there when his compatriots invaded the country. Appointed translator with the rank of captain by the occupation forces, he tried to help his fellow Brothers, in particular, by making it possible for them to keep their house in Nhatrang. He helped other people also. At the end of the war, the local representative of France thanked him for his services to French residents.

In France, Lieutenant Schmitt was an interpreter at the Kommandantur (German administrative centre) in Troyes from 1941 to 1944. He was the Brother Kilian we mentioned earlier. The many services he was able to render to the local population because of his position, earned him the name of 'Le Bon Dieu' (Good God) of Troyes. Following the Allied landing in Provence, Brother Trivier (Joseph Seymard), Visitor of the District of Marseilles, and Brother Simbert (Adrien Bonhomme) served as intermediaries between a German general, who wanted protection for his wounded soldiers, and the French army. They also succeeded in persuading the general to surrender in order to avoid a pointless battle.

The Brothers also helped local populations in distress. In circular 315, dated February 11th 1945, the Brother Vicar General reported how Brothers in Belgium and in northern France came to the aid of victims of bombing raids. When, at the end of 1944 and at the beginning of 1945, the Germany army took up position in the Vosges, the little town of Cornimont was caught up in an attack launched by the French army which had come from North Africa. The Brothers from the community risked their lives by going from house to house to take food to the local population and to evacuate the injured.

Conclusion

During the war, many Brothers were able to live their religious and apostolic life without any particular difficulty. But it was not the same for many Brothers who were more directly affected by it: the war had repercussions on them and on those around them.

A number of Brothers did not live in community for a longer or shorter period of time and, while some were able to keep in contact with other members of the Institute at one level or another, others were completely cut off from it. Under these conditions, these Brothers had to fend for themselves. For example:

- some French Brothers were prisoners of war from 1940 to 1945. Some German or Austrian Brothers found themselves in the same situation for a number of years, even after the end of the war.

– in the same way, Canadian, American English, German and Austrian Brothers remained in internment camps for several years. Other Brothers were in concentration camps.

Some regions of the Institute were out of contact with the centre of the Institute for the whole of the war. Others benefitted from the presence of a Brother Assistant who, having been given special powers, made decisions dictated by circumstances. In both of these cases, these regions enjoyed a certain degree of autonomy.

Circumstances also brought about a change in mentality. For example:

– in the case of Canada, Nive Voisine concludes his volume 2, which ends with 1946, with the following remark: ‘The quiet revolution has already begun. The Brothers of the Christian Schools will not come out of it unscathed’ (p. 461);

– in the case of the United States, Brother Luke Salm writes in a contribution to this present work, ‘Now that the war has ended, it would be an illusion to believe that the Institute could return to the directives and practices which prevailed before the war’;

– in countries subject to foreign domination, the war strengthened the national pride of the population. This was true of the indigenous Brothers, who found it more difficult to accept being kept in a state of inferiority by “missionaries”. This was the case in Vietnam.

To what extent would these factors of change be taken into account by the Institute and, in particular, by the General Chapter which began on May 15th 1946?

4 - THE 1946 GENERAL CHAPTER

In 1946, a General Chapter was called. It took place shortly after a worldwide conflagration which had caused the loss of many lives and great destruction, and had brought about a change in mentality. All of this had affected the Institute. To what extent was the Chapter influenced by these events? This is a question we can ask ourselves as we begin to consider its proceedings.

Preliminary phases

– Convocation of the Chapter

The last Chapter had taken place in 1934. According to the Rule, the next one should have been held in 1944, but circumstances had made this impossible. The Brother Assistants had had recourse to the Holy See to have their mandates extended. Circular 315 informed the Brothers of a rescript, dated February 1944, authorising this extension.

A circular, dated October 8th 1945 and sent from Mauléon, convoked the General Chapter. It stated that the number of ex-officio members was 22, including the Brother Postulator General, and that of elected delegates, 95. A supplement to circular 316, dated February 2nd 1946, announced that the Chapter would open on May 15th 1946, at the Generalate in Rome.

– The beginning of the Chapter

The first session was held on May 15th, at 5.0 pm., during which the Brother Vicar General welcomed the delegates whose presence, he said, “constituted, because of current circumstances, an exceptional event, for which they should thank Providence” (GA ED 228-4, register 3, 59).

For the constitution of the commission responsible for verifying the powers of elected delegates, a proposition was adopted, that “in order to preserve the catholic character of the capitular Assembly”, 5 elected members would be chosen from among 13 delegates coming from different countries. In its report, dated the afternoon of May 16th, this commission informed delegates that:

– Brother Judore, a former Assistant, had expressed the wish to be dispensed from attending chapter sessions;

– Brother Visitors Roderich (Germany), Domisé Rogatien (Indochina) and Arèse Julien (Reims) had asked to be represented by their substitutes, that is, by Brothers Aldomar Kilian, Cyprien Gam and Arthème Léonce, respectively;

– Brother Amadeo Luigi, Visitor of the District of Turin, had died and had been replaced by Brother Costanzo.

– **The letter from the Congregation for Religious**

On May 18th, during the 3.30 pm. session, the members of the Chapter were informed of a letter, dated May 16th 1946, that Cardinal Lavitrano, Prefect of the Congregation for Religious, had sent to Cardinal Marmaggi, Protector of the Institute. The text of this letter is included in the *Register of Deliberations* in the form of a nine-page insert. The purpose of the letter is stated as follows: “The Congregation feels it opportune to establish certain criteria and norms which can serve to improve the way discussions are conducted, and make capitular deliberations more concrete and more practical”. It referred to six areas:

I - Rules and Constitutions

II - End and Spirit of the Institute

III - Spirit of fidelity to observance

IV - Supernatural criteria for the allocation of responsibilities

V - Vicar General

VI - Assistants and Assistancies

An N.B. specifies that “this letter, by request of H.E. Cardinal Marmaggi, must not be made public”. The text of the letter was read out a second time during the 5.0 pm. session on Sunday May 19th.

The work of the Chapter

– **Election of the Brother Superior General**

On Sunday May 19th, at 6.0 pm., the Chapter proceeded to elect the Brother Superior General. The successive ballots gave the following results:

– 1st ballot: Brother Alcime Marie - 39 votes, Br Athanase Émile - 38, Br Zacharias - 28, etc. Following this ballot, Br Alcime Marie, Procurator to the Holy See, asked not to be elected because of the precarious state of his health.

– 2nd ballot: Brother Athanase Émile - 53 votes, Br. Zacharias - 43, Br. Alcime Marie - 9, etc.

– 3rd ballot: Brother Athanase Émile - 60 votes, Br. Zacharias - 51, Brother Dionysius van Jezus - 3, etc.

Brother Athanase Émile was proclaimed the 20th successor of Saint John Baptist de La Salle.

– Introduction of the revision of the Rules

On the morning of May 20th, the Brother Superior emphasised that the session was of an “historic” nature because it introduced the revision of the “Rules and Constitutions” which had been called for by the 1934 Chapter. In view of this, the Brother Superior Junien Victor had set up a commission which had drawn up this revision. The new Superior made the point, however, that a discussion of this question would not be on the agenda of the Chapter. He gave the reason for this during the morning session on May 21st, saying it was “in due deference to instructions from the Sacred Congregation” (p. 85). A point relative to the revision of the Rules was touched upon, however, during this session: it had to do with the functions of the Brother Vicar General, which the letter from the Congregation for Religious had asked to be defined.

Adopting the propositions put forward by the commission on regularity, the general assembly voted in favour of choosing a Vicar General from among the Assistants. As a result, it was decided that his election would follow that of the Assistants. As the Brother Vicar General could be called upon to replace the Brother Superior General, it was decided that the election commission would be responsible for his designation. Following the elections, a certain number of points were raised in the general assembly in view of a revision of the Rules. Points raised included the prohibition of the priesthood and of the use of tobacco, mentioned in the letter from the Congregation for Religious.

– Election of the Brother Assistants and the designation of the Brother Vicar General

During the morning session of May 22nd, the Brother Superior announced that Brother Assistants Abban Philip, Pedro Luis, Nivard Joseph, Francesco di Maria and Romuald Hosea had resigned and that the other Assistants could be re-elected. He stipulated also that there would be 4 French Assistants, 2 English-speaking Assistants, and

1 each for Italy, Canada, Spain, Belgium, Central Europe and Latin America. This was linked with the restructuring of the French Districts which had been reduced to 13, and to a more international sharing out of what were henceforth known as “Assistancies”.

The election of the Assistants took place the same day. When the time came to vote, one of the capitulants asked what significance should be attached to the “lists of possible candidates presented by the Regime”. The Brother Superior answered that the “indications provided responded to the wishes of capitulants not to cast their votes at random and for persons they did not know” (p. 107).

Several Brother Assistants were reinstated: Dionysius van Jezus for Belgium; and Adolphe Marie, Philothée Jean and Zacharias for France. The assembly then proceeded to elect the following new Assistants: Eliphus Victor (Myles Edward Sullivan), born in 1892, for the United States; Guillermo Felix (Orencio Calvo), born in 1897, for Spain; Gioachino (Giuseppe Gallo), born in 1895, for Italy; Nivard Anselme (Adrien Vézina), born in 1877, for Canada; Lawrence O’Toole (Patrick Knox), born in 1904 in Ireland, for English-speaking countries outside the United States; Antonio Maria (Narciso Lozano), born in 1901 in Mexico, for Latin America, but excluding some Districts attached to Spain; Damien Louis (Louis Villeneuve), born in 1893, for France; Fridolin Maria (Josef Staribacher), born in Austria, for central Europe. He had to be replaced on June 4th by Brother Dominikus Norbert (Alfred Staudinger), born in Austria in 1901. As can be seen, several of the new Brother Assistants, such as the latter, were relatively young. On May 25th, Brother Dionysius van Jezus was designated Vicar General.

– Discussion of commission reports

As was customary, the notes sent to the Chapter - about 3,000 in 1946 - were divided up between the ten commissions. Discussions in the general assembly were based on the reports drawn up by these commissions, in the order in which they completed their work. Discussions concluded with the adoption or rejection of the recommendations of these commissions. We shall restrict ourselves here to mentioning what we consider interesting in the reports and in the discussions which ensued, based on the *Register of Deliberations* (GA ED 228-4).

On May 28th, the 4th commission presented the part of their report concerning **religious studies**. This report, “while exalting the beauty of religious sciences and highlighting the splendour of our vocation as catechists, does not fail to mention any of the difficulties encountered in communities in safeguarding the time allotted by the Rule to

the study of religion and the preparation of catechism lessons” (p. 130). A discussion followed on the examination system in place in the Institute. In this connection, the wish was expressed that Rome be approached with a view to obtaining official recognition for the diplomas awarded as a result of these exams, and official authorisation for the Brothers to teach religion. A request was made also that a centre be set up in the Institute for advanced religious studies.

The report of the 5th commission on **schools and gratuity** reveals that “the notes concerning gratuity prove that love for the Institute and attachment to its founding spirit remain very lively” (p. 136). The report ends by asking “the Most Honourable Brother Superior General to have an objective and precise study made of the object and the obligations of the vow to teach gratuitously, and of the rule of gratuity” (p. 136). One capitulant feared that resorting to charging fees might lead some Brother Directors to see “their school from a commercial point of view”. The Brother Superior emphasised that “gratuitous schools must be maintained where possible, and the necessity to charge fees must not change the character of the school so much that it is no longer a school for working-class people”. The Brother Procurator to the Holy See added that “the letter from the Sacred Congregation asked that the gratuity and apostolic disinterestedness of the ministry be maintained” (p. 137).

Another question that was raised was that of “the presence of the female element”, regarding which it was said that “circumstances during the war had made it necessary to make exceptions, which must be made to cease immediately” (p. 138). Although the Brother Superior said it was “a matter of conscience for Brother Visitors to forbid these persons to live in the community house and enter the rooms of the Brothers”, he admitted that female staff could work in kitchens or premises separated from the community house. Regarding notes that had been sent in deploring “that the presence of too many lay teachers in schools stifle the religious element”, the report suggested that “the Brother Director follow the progress of these lay teachers and help with their formation”. The report referred also to notes which stressed the harm caused by the excessive work too often imposed on the Brothers. It proposed that “permission to open more schools be refused when the ratio between the number of lay teachers and Brothers was above a certain figure” (p. 139).

The 10th commission on the missions reported a number of obstacles to the missionary expansion of the Institute. To promote this expansion, it proposed that in the Institute, or better still, in each Assistancy, there should be a return to the idea of creating a centre for missionary formation. It called on the Brother Superior to send out a cir-

cular which treated thoroughly the question of missionary spirit and work. After the discussion which ensued, the assembly called for the creation of a Secretariat for the Missions in the Generalate.

The report on the **perseverance** of the Brothers highlighted that “the causes for the loss of vocations could be grouped under three headings:

- 1° Insufficient formation during the probationary period;
- 2° Defective training for the apostolate;
- 3° Insufficient spiritual direction in community” (p. 145).

Other “motives for desertion” were also given. The Brother Procurator to the Holy See demonstrated that while the number of Brothers had increased by 29% between 1920 and 1938, this increase was much smaller than that of other religious orders. He lay the “blame for this comparative inferiority on the lamentable wound of defections. Year in, year out, the Institute lost 400 Brothers through defection, the average number of Brothers in a District” (p. 146). The question was taken up again at another session when the second novitiate was mentioned. The assembly asked for it to be made possible for more Brothers to benefit from it.

When the report on the **vows**, in general, and on the vow of poverty, in particular, was presented, the discussion centred more on forms of admission to vows than on the vows themselves. In connection with poverty, there was also a discussion about wearing wrist-watches, which had become current practice. As for “personal budgets” which had been introduced in Spain because of circumstances, it was said that “since the conditions no longer existed, these budgets can no longer be tolerated, but so that there is mention of the discussion in the Chapter Register, it will be said that the Chapter formally proscribed it” (p. 156).

The report of the commission on **regularity** expressed the hope that “the new edition of the Common Rules would bring about a renewal of fidelity”. Regarding prayers and spiritual exercises, the report asked for the reinstatement of evening prayer which too often was replaced by devotional exercises. During the discussion, a reference was made to the answer of the Congregation for Religious, asking that “Brothers be forbidden to take off their religious habit for sport, camping, etc., without authorisation from Major Superiors” (p. 158).

The commission on **publications** expressed the wish that the publication of the *Bulletin of the Christian Schools* be resumed, that “films on the life of St John Baptist de

La Salle, and on the activities of the Institute throughout the world” be made, and that a propaganda and information bureau be set up in Rome.

The 1st commission which was concerned with **recruitment** drew the attention of the Chapter to the role of Brother recruiters, whose necessity was not contested. In the second part of its report, it spoke of the professional formation of Brothers in charge of temporal affairs, and recommended they spent two years in the scholasticate for this purpose. The suggestion that relatives should be allowed to attend the taking-of-the-habit ceremony was rejected by a small majority.

A report on **Catholic Action** in our schools notes “the unease created by the difficulty of adapting the general directives given to specific cases. The reasons for this difficulty seemed to be, above all, an incomplete knowledge of the problem, and the lack of definition in some places of the role of the Brother in Catholic Action movements...(p. 171). The Brother Superior defined the scope of the debate: “The concept of Catholic Action is not up for discussion. The principle of the involvement of our Brothers in it, in our schools, is recalled in the Rule, the text of which is currently being considered. Our task is to look for ways and means of safeguarding our religious life while at the same time being involved in Catholic Action” (p. 174). There followed a long debate.

Regarding the report on **the elderly and the health of the Brothers**, in which “what is connected with this question is more especially analysed”, it is noted that the Brother Postulator General expressed the wish that the Superiors also should grant themselves a few days’ holiday each year.

The report of the 7th commission on the **general administration** of the Institute notes that from the 343 notes on this subject “there emerges a kind of general unease which, however, is not anxiety” (p. 183). Of these notes, 92 were concerned with Brother Directors: some accused them of lacking authority, others of abusing their power.

In its report on **devotion to the holy Founder**, the 3rd commission proposed in particular the adoption of the invocation “Saint John Baptist de La Salle, our Blessed Father and Founder, pray for us”.

The section of the report of the 8th commission dealing with **religious names** made the Superior General wonder whether “we are going to suppress a tradition worthy of respect?” The part of the report concerned with **dress**, noted the large number of notes concerning the mantle. In this connection, it was permitted for Brothers to wear a kind of “quilted overcoat” worn by priests, to protect themselves from the cold. During another session, the question of **missionary Brothers returning to visit their families** led

the Brother Superior “to remind the Brothers that holidays were not a “right” but something that was tolerated” (GA ED 228-4, register 4, 2).

The report of the 4th commission took the form of a general survey of the **intellectual and pedagogical formation** of the Brothers. The re-opening of university scholasticates closed because of the war was desirable, and the exchange of Brothers between countries for language studies was encouraged. The question of pedagogical formation was treated at length. It was said that the creation of an advanced institute of pedagogy in Rome to complete “the formation of an elite group of our Brothers” was desirable. One capitulant observed that “the desire to obtain diplomas rapidly in the scholasticate was detrimental to intellectual and even religious formation, and prevented any kind of pedagogical formation” (p. 6).

In its report on **houses of formation**, the 2nd commission advocated the creation of pre-junior novitiates for children between the ages of 11 and 13. Regarding the holidays of junior novices, the Brother Superior remarked that “Formerly, there were none, and now there is a tendency to have too many”. On the possibility of extending the duration of the novitiate to two years, it is noted that “discussion was lively and heated”. As for the extension of the duration of the scholasticate to three years, one capitulant said it “will put France in a very difficult situation”.

– End of the Chapter

On June 6th, the Chapter voted on the propositions that had been retained. The following day, the closing session took place. A page inserted into the *Register of Deliberations* mentions that on June 7th 1946 “the Most Honourable Brother Athanase Émile, Superior General, brought together a post-Chapter commission to put the finishing touches to the new edition of the Rule of Government, and to bring it into line with the decisions of the General Chapter, taking into account the notes left by the venerable capitulants”. It is noted also that “Three copies of the original draft revised, as had been requested, were handed to the Most Honourable Brother Superior General on June 15th 1946 by the Brothers designated by the capitulants to constitute the post-Chapter commission charged with the revision of the Common Rules and the Rule of Government of our Institute”.

Results of the Chapter

On July 16th 1946, the Superior General addressed a circular to the Institute to inform

the Brothers of the results of the General Chapter. He began the circular by expressing his feelings at the prospect of undertaking the task entrusted to him. On the one hand, he wrote, “In the face of the distressing problems posed by the war, the material and moral ruin that has to be remedied, the religious renewal that has to be brought about, and the authority that has to be restored to regular observance, we would be justified if we allowed ourselves to be overcome by fear” (circ. 318, 6). On the other hand, he found consolation in the fact that he “observed that the cult of respect for authority...had not been impaired, despite the ideas which currently raged in some sections of society - insane independence, emancipation, contempt for the elderly and for authority” (p. 7). The Chapter report which followed was divided into several parts which we shall consider now.

– Historical background of the Chapter

The Brother Superior first of all recalled how the need to remedy as soon as possible the temporary situation created by the death of the Superior General Brother Junien Victor had led to the decision to begin the Chapter on May 15th 1946. He went on to describe the sequence of Chapter events. We shall note here some of those we did not mention before, such as:

- the opening by Cardinal Marmaggi on May 15th of a catechetical exhibition organised by the Brothers of Italy;
- the election on May 27th of the Election Commission;
- the papal audience granted to Chapter delegates on June 4th by Pope Pius XII.

– Directives from the Sacred Congregation for Religious to the Chapter

In the circular, the Brother Superior spoke of the intervention of the Congregation for Religious in the following terms: as it had “considered it good to allow our elections to be held in the due manner and in all freedom, it was likely we would receive from it some directives to follow regarding, either our various activities, or the planned revision of our Rules, or our government” (circ. 318, 43). In fact, these directives had arrived at the beginning of the Chapter. Among the reasons which justified this intervention, Brother Athanase Emile mentioned the following:

- Since the 1923 Chapter, “a certain infatuation with classical studies and teaching tended, in some Districts, to favour the provision of schools for better-off pupils”;

- the traditional rule concerning the use of tobacco was confirmed in the letter;
- the letter countered a dozen or so notes calling for a change in the point of the Rule, and in the article in the Bull, concerning the prohibition of the ecclesiastical state;
- as some French Districts suffered from insufficient recruitment “resulting from the secularisation imposed by evil legislation”, a regrouping of Districts was necessary.

– **Revision of the Rules**

The circular recalled first of all in this connection that one of the roles of General Chapters was to adapt the Rules according to the needs of time and place. But this adaptation had to be guided by two principles:

1. All changes had to be in harmony with the essential aim and the nature of the Congregation (p. 57).
2. All changes had to be in complete conformity with the spirit of the Institute and that of the Founder.

During the 1934 Chapter, the commission on the Rule had occasion to examine a number of very serious notes asking for a revision of the Rules.

After showing how this question had been treated in the Institute since 1726, the Brother Superior outlined how Brother Junien Victor had acted on the request of the 1934 Chapter by setting up two commissions and that, after his death, the work of revision had resulted in a draft report which had been examined by the Regime in Rome in March-April 1946. Consultants from the Congregation for Religious had also made their contribution. When the question was asked whether the Chapter would have to discuss the Rules, the opinion of several prelates was that the capitulants to whom the draft would be read out and given, would be asked to submit their comments in writing, and that towards the end of the work of the Chapter, the assembly “would designate a post-Chapter commission to collate and study these notes...and correct the draft presented by the Chapter” (p. 63). This was the procedure followed in the case of both the Common Rules and the Rule of Government.

– **The work of the commissions**

Next, the Brother Superior summarised the work done by the various Chapter commissions, and listed the recommendations made by them which were adopted. We shall restrict ourselves to mentioning some of these.

On the basis of the work of the 1st commission, it was decided that “Brother recruiters” would henceforth be called “Brothers responsible for the Work of Vocations”. As for the duration of the scholasticate for Brothers in charge of temporal affairs, it would last a minimum of one year.

On the recommendation of the 2nd commission, it was decided that pre-junior novitiates should be established separate from junior novitiates; that the timetable of novitiates be revised to allow for more time for lessons, reflection and personal work; that the scholasticate should last for two years as a minimum; and that the professional and pedagogical formation provided by it be effective.

Following the remarks of the 3rd commission regarding the perseverance of the Brothers, the Chapter stated that Brother Directors should be solicitous in caring for their young Brothers; that “persons of the other sex” employed in houses should be eliminated as soon as possible; that overwork should be avoided so as to leave the Brothers the normal time required by their regular life, their personal studies and their professional duties. The Chapter also asked for greater strictness regarding admission to vows and especially to perpetual profession.

Of the propositions put forward by the 4th commission relating to the studies of the Brothers, the following were adopted: a serious programme of studies should be established for houses of formation; catechism examinations for the “*Cours Moyen*” would be corrected by each Assistancy; studies in houses of formation should contribute to the harmonious religious, intellectual and professional formation of candidates; the study of modern languages, especially that of the holy Founder, should be encouraged.

The Chapter adopted the following recommendations of the 5th commission: the development of popular education should be given preference; the “religious reorganisation” of schools should proceed by the immediate elimination of the “female element”, and the progressive reduction of the “lay element”; that Brothers be invited to make it their duty to follow diligently the directives of the Church regarding Catholic Action.

Numerous suggestions made by the 6th commission were adopted: that all communities should be provided with a fairly detailed *Coutumier*; that the new edition of the Rule should be the occasion for restoring its authority.

Apart from items concerning General Chapters and the various departments of the general administration of the Institute, which would be introduced into the Rule of Government, there was request for visit reports to be simplified; for District Councils to be held regularly; and for Brother Directors to meet for days of recollection.

Of the recommendations of the 8th commission, which dealt with a variety of matters, the Chapter adopted the following: religious names should be kept, but the list of available names should be revised; missionaries could return periodically to their native land, and this should be regulated by a standard set of rules.

The Chapter adopted the recommendation of the 9th commission that a permanent propaganda and information office be established at the Generalate; and that a film on St John Baptist de La Salle and the work of the Institute be made.

The Chapter adopted also the suggestion of the 10th commission that a circular should be prepared which treated thoroughly the question of the missionary apostolate; and that a missionary secretariat and a missionary novitiate be established at the Generalate.

Conclusion

The 1946 Chapter took place after a war which had affected the whole world and in a particular way the Institute. Brother Athanase Émile referred to it at the beginning of the circular giving the results of the Chapter. During the audience with the Holy Father, he had mentioned the number of Brothers who had been killed in the war. It is said that the rapporteur of the 5th commission had astonished everyone when he began his report with the words, "In this second year of the atomic age..." (GA ED 238-7). But apart from this reference, one could easily suppose that the Chapter was completely unaware of the context in which it was taking place. Of course, some changes were made as a result of the letter from the Congregation for Religious, even if the re-division of French Districts and the grouping of Districts in Assistancies was the idea of the Brother Superior General. When all is said and done, one could say that there was nothing extraordinary about the 1946 Chapter, and that it was no different from the ones which preceded it. It treated the same questions, and in the same way as usual.

All the same, one can see that, regarding certain points, there was some connection with the events which had just occurred. We see this when the Brother Superior, borrowing the expression of his predecessor, speaks of "religious renewal", or when he takes the unrealistic decision to "eliminate the female element" and reduce the "lay element", whom it had been necessary to employ in greater numbers during the war but, with whose services in many places, it had already become impossible to dispense. Judging by these references, it seems that the Chapter felt that it was its duty to remedy the consequences, considered harmful, of the upheaval caused by the war. On the other hand, there is no mention of the repercussions these events could have had on the Brothers

who suffered on account of them as soldiers, when they were wounded, taken prisoner, deported or interned. There is no reference either to the changes that could have occurred in the mentality of Brothers during this period.

In the final analysis, we are justified in wondering whether, implicitly, the 1946 Chapter did not rather take the events of 1904 as its point of reference. This is the case when mention is made of the Brothers who were victims of the political attacks on the Institute in France, or of the promotion of “religious renewal” in the Institute. It was a question of removing all the harmful effects of not only the war, but also of the more distant events of 1904. We should not forget that in France, the Brothers had been authorised in 1940 to wear the religious habit once again. This fact seems to be connected with the insistence with which Brothers were reminded not to fail to wear this habit, even if it was envisaged that an overcoat could be added to provide more protection against the cold. When the last effects of 1904 were removed with the re-division of the French Districts, the Institute could start again as if 1904 had never happened. From this point of view, one can consider the 1946 Chapter as a kind of revenge for what happened in 1904.

Was this Chapter held too soon? The obligation to hold it without delay, not only because the 10-year interval between two Chapters had ended in 1944, but also because of the need to designate a new Superior General, led to its hasty convocation. Perhaps, if its convocation had been delayed somewhat, it might have enabled the Chapter to become more aware of the effect the world conflict had had, and still continued to have. We can speculate also about the consequences of choosing a Superior General who had made his formation at the end of the 19th century, and who had experienced at first-hand the events of 1904, in preference to one of a more recent generation. The distribution of votes during the election shows that the majority of the Chapter delegates had their eyes fixed more on this past, than on the challenges of the present. This speculation is all the more justified when we see the great pressure Brother Athanase Émile put on the Chapter by his interventions, the control he exercised over commission reports (cf. ED 228-4, register 4, 120), not to mention the silence he appears to have imposed on certain capitulants.

EPILOGUE

At the end of the presentation of this period of Institute history, it would be difficult to draw a conclusion which differed greatly from what was said in the introduction entitled “Continuity”, or from the partial conclusions reached at the end of the various sections of this volume. It would mean referring again to the contrast between the events which affected the Institute as a whole, or more particularly a certain number of Brothers, and the internal life of the Institute which was somewhat disconnected from these events; or to a continuity with the past which left very little room for legitimate aspirations arising from the situations in which many Brothers had found themselves.

It seemed preferable to end with an epilogue which marks the end of not only the period we have just considered, but also of the whole work entitled *An Introduction to the History of the Brothers of the Christian Schools*. This is, in fact, what Georges Rigault did when he concluded the nine-volume series of his General History of the Institute by an “Assessment of the Lasallian Congregation in the Year 1904”, some fifty years after this date.

An epilogue brings one era to an end and introduces the period that follows, a period the author intends to consider after allowing some time to pass. In our case, sixty years have already passed since 1946, the year in which this work ends.

What we know of the first twenty years of this period - even without having studied it at any great depth - enables us to say that, in two ways, these years are a prolongation of those we have been considering. On the one hand, we see a repetition of what had been done since the end of the 19th century, accompanied even by a desire to re-establish what the events of 1904 had disturbed. On the other, we find the same difficulty to respond positively to the wishes shared by a certain number to adapt more to changes in society, or to take advantage of the seeds of renewal which had appeared in the Church, so as to understand better the vocation of the Brother, and improve the formation given in the Institute. A distinction needs to be made, however, between the first ten years and the ten years that followed.

The first of the two tendencies we have just mentioned was largely predominant in the years when Brother Athanase Émile was at the head of the Institute, and during the mandate of the Vicar General Brother Denis, which ended in 1956. Regarding the term in office of Brother Athanase Émile, a significant fact was the publication of the 1947 Rules. The revision of the Rules had been requested by the 1934 Chapter. The capitulants of the 1946 Chapter were associated with this revision, but it was clearly the

Brother Superior General who decided that the new Rules should be approved as a whole by the Sacred Congregation for Religious, so that they became inalterable. Up till then, it was thought in the Institute that only the articles included in the Bull of 1725 were subject to such approbation. The intention of the Superior General reflected a concept of the Rules that was current at the time, and which is very much in evidence in the circular announcing the publication of the new text. The circular referred in several places to the work of the Redemptorist Father Colin, entitled *Le Culte de la Règle*. This work, as also another one by the same author, *Le Culte des Vœux*, were particularly recommended to the Brothers at the time, and were given to novices for their spiritual reading. The term “Culte” (cult or devotion) used in both titles, in itself is an indication of the approach adopted in these two books to the Rules and to the Vows.

In a climate such as this, the desire of some for greater flexibility and diversity in the application of the Rules had little chance of being heard, let alone of being listened to. This can be seen, for example, from what we read in a biography of Brother Charles (Bruno Prat). When, in the course of an address to the Brother Visitors at their annual retreat, Brother Athanase Émile forbade Brothers looking after pupils at holiday camps or sports fixtures to take off their religious habit, this Brother registered his disagreement by asking to be relieved of his duties as a Brother Visitor. On the other hand, as the one in charge of the bookshop run by the Brothers in Paris, he offered practical support to Brothers involved in the renewal of what was called “Catechism” and which was beginning to be called “Catechetics”. But with what suspicion and reservations were these Brothers treated by the Superiors of the Institute!

By comparison with the years which preceded it, the 1956 General Chapter was characterised by a certain degree of openness. This openness was modest still where vocal prayers were concerned, where now changes could be introduced to mark the liturgical seasons. There was greater openness regarding the religious studies of the Brothers: study programmes and “catechism exams” were completely overhauled. The same was true of the study of the thinking of the holy Founder, and of the transmission of his spiritual and educational heritage. All this now became the subject of what were called “Lasallian Studies”. During the ten years of the mandate of the Superior General Brother Nicet Joseph (Pierre Loubet), the programme which had been established was implemented and the initiatives of Brothers were encouraged.

And yet, what “subtlety” had to be used sometimes during the Chapter to gain acceptance even for changes which were obviously necessary! Or, subsequently, how difficult it was to prepare the new text of the Rules called for by the 1956 Chapter, given the con-

stant worry of ensuring that the new text would be approved by the Congregation for Religious! And what tension there was regarding the religious habit when, for example, in France the Brother Assistants tried to replace the tricorne, which was still worn, by a hat which, funnily enough, was very similar to one which was very fashionable at the time! And how vigilant certain Assistants were that there was no deviation from the norm, in particular in Districts other than those for which they were responsible!

After these twenty years which ended with the Vatican Council, the General Chapter of 1966-1967 was a major event in the history of the Institute. In preparation for this Chapter all Districts were consulted. The statistics which were drawn up at the time revealed that in 1965, there were more than 15,000 Brothers in the Institute, which was the highest number reached since 1903. In its first session, the Chapter adopted an approach which differed from that of preceding Chapters. For the first time, a non-French Superior General was elected in the person of Brother Charles Henry (Thomas Buttimer). By a large majority, the capitulants refused to introduce the priesthood into the Institute, running the risk of incurring the displeasure of the Congregation for Religious which was urging it to do so. The second session of the Chapter in 1967, fulfilled for the Institute the function of a "Special Chapter" which the Decree on the Renewal of Religious Life obliged all religious congregations to hold. As congregations were also invited to revise their Rules in order to bring them more into line with the Gospel and the original inspiration of their Founder, this became the principal objective of the work of the Chapter. But quite apart from this task, the capitulants felt the need to show how, when brought together in a 'living synthesis', the various components of the Brothers' life gave a picture of the "Brother in the World of Today".

After the Chapter, delegates had some difficulty in communicating its results to Brothers who had not followed the same process as the capitulants, and whom, in the case of many, nothing up till then had prepared for the changes called for by the Chapter. Nevertheless, the fruits of the Chapter are undeniable. To the extent that Brothers followed what was proposed to them, they were renewed in their commitment to their religious and apostolic life. Here and there, initiatives were born to work more closely with the poor, as the Chapter had requested.

Very quickly, however, the increased speed at which changes were taking place in society caught the Brothers progressively affected by them all the more unawares as, up till then, the Institute had hardly taken these changes into account, in particular, following the end of the Second World War. Certain Brothers, ill-prepared, gave up; others rushed headlong into ill-advised schemes. Many others, however, found ways of reacting to this

new situation, or of responding to the needs they discovered among young people, or even among adults. At the same time, the secularisation which was affecting the Church itself, resulted in a sudden fall in vocations to the priesthood and religious life, at least in the West. On the other hand, in the Institute, it served to stimulate something which should have been undertaken a long time before, namely, the development of association with lay people prepared to participate in the Lasallian educational mission.

During this period, of which we have mentioned only a few significant aspects, it is quite certain that the Chapter of 1966-1967 constitutes a real break in the history of the Institute. In fact, our study of the twenty years which preceded this Chapter could have been included in the period which is the subject of the present volume, which would then form a coherent whole. However, as it would be difficult to be the historian of a period in which one had actively participated, it seemed preferable - perhaps I am being over-scrupulous - not to pursue my contribution to the History of the Institute beyond 1946.

This has led the International Council for Lasallian Studies to draw up plans for research work to be done on the sixty or so years since that date with a view to publishing a sequel to the material contained in this *Introduction to the History of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools*.

I wish to express my gratitude to those who have collaborated in the writing of this work. In particular, I should like to recall the work of Brothers Lucien Frings, for Belgium, and Secondino Scaglione, for Italy.

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