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The Brothers of the  
Christian schools in  
France and the  
educational service of  
“artisans and the poor”  
through technical education

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## Presentation

Brother Henri Bédel puts in our hands another great gift of his research. His usual readers will again enjoy his precise presentation, lively style, academic thoroughness, and acute vision; this last trait both in his deep grasp of the past and in his interpretation of the present as well as in his justified optimism concerning the future, in this case of the reality of France, but the same is true for great areas of the Institute in the short term. For readers of his works in the *Lasallian Studies* collection, the present work could be considered as a further look at a very concrete aspect which is well-stated in the title.

The first-time reader of a work by Brother Henri Bédel will be captivated the wonderful way he deals with the topic. The particular circumstances that are described (historical events, geographic places, educational laws, present and past school legislation, unavoidable acronyms) present no obstacle in appreciating the magisterial history as told from the origins all the way up until today. This work will be a magnificent way to enter into more general works by the same author, especially the recently published ones on the history of the Institute.

The ups and downs of technical education in France reflect, in an extraordinary way, the same adventures of the Institute in that country. Birth, death, and resurrection succeed one another on occasion, both in concrete works and even in "God's work." In times of greater stability we see prodigious adaptation, and this is the only imperative of survival. But to survive has no meaning in and of itself - this is done in a calculated manner by human organizations that understand success in a different way - there is meaning only in the ambit of mission, of salvation, of personal relationships, when we let history be told by the beneficiaries of these activities, and when impossible circumstances are averted by the zeal of some Brothers who base their lives in the mission. Their zeal is miraculous. "Citius, Altius, Fortius" (Swifter, Higher, Stronger) are not only the words that are prominent in the Olympics. They represent, no doubt, all Lasallian tradition: swifter, higher, stronger.

If we are talking about wise adaptation, then the Brothers, and today so many heroic lay persons, are truly champions. When the objectives are clear and noble - look at the title again - then being victorious is not a problem. What is attributed to John Baptist de La Salle himself at the beginning of the bulletin as regards the useful and future achievements of education offered by him, can be fully applied to all those who have continued his work. Abundant examples exist to affirm that it is not at all about continuing to persist in attacking such and such a threat or change. Lasallian work is always on the verge of renewal with a "plus" that makes it unique. So it is that, like the gods, Lasallian heritage does not put up with the ethic of the minimum. Perhaps this is one of the secrets of its constant expansion and vigor.

One of the things which this bulletin succeeds in doing best is to introduce, in the last part, the testimony of some Brothers and lay persons in their struggle to make education accessible to the needy, by quality education in which the targets themselves are involved in the final results. The reader will make personal connections and sentiments as he contrasts the testimony offered with that of his own reality and he will be encouraged when he sees the same emotions and feelings as a type of common denominator in Lasallians when they are able to melt like wax in a mission that is taken up in giving life. This is the Gospel paradox here and now.

## Introduction

The first initiatives of John Baptist de La Salle which, about 1680, led to the foundation of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools were linked to the effort directed, within certain Christian groups, to developing schooling for poor children; the end pursued was to give these latter a Christian education along with enabling them to attain the elements of knowledge. At the same time, persons bound up with the same milieus had in view enabling these children to then prepare for their working future by means of “apprenticeship training” organised within the craft guilds. The master-craftsmen to whom the apprentices were entrusted requiring remuneration for this service and for the costs involved, generous persons supplied the sums of money in place of those parents who could not see their way to do so. The apprenticeship system was, indeed, the only one that enabled a person at that time to become a qualified tradesman.

This brings to light a dual fact. The first is that schooling and apprenticeship training were considered, at the time, as having equal importance for the training of the children of “poor” families. The second is that these two routes were clearly differentiated.

In the course of the XVIIIth century, these two means of training were maintained and kept their importance for the children of the working class. Likewise, in the same era, for the children of “comfortably off” families, various pedagogical theorists were asking that a more concrete and scientific teaching be available, parallel with “humanities” taught in the colleges of the period. Along these lines, teaching establishments giving a higher level of education were opened: Navigation Schools, Military Schools, Schools of Mines, for Bridges and Roadways, for Arts and Crafts... (Cf. André Prévot: *L’Enseignement Technique chez les Frères des Écoles Chrétiennes au XVIII<sup>e</sup> et au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècles*, 41). The Jesuits, until their suppression in 1762, had several schools of this type.

During the Revolution which broke out in France in 1789, numerous plans were drawn up to organise an educational system controlled and financed by the State. In point of fact, during this time, the effort previously directed towards schooling the children of

the working class came to nothing. As for the training for a trade for these children, it remained assured by the apprenticeship system. But this was disorganised by the suppression of the trade guilds. By contrast, the "High Schools" as they were henceforth called, were maintained; the future Polytechnic School was created in 1794.

Napoleon Bonaparte organised an educational system that was maintained by the restored monarchy. The school law of 1833, known as the Guizot Law, completed this work for primary teaching and, the same was done for secondary teaching by the Falloux Law in 1850. Nothing was changed in what related to vocational training any more than in what related to establishments giving higher technical training. On the other hand, in 1848, a decree of the provisional Government set up following the February Revolution established the bases for Agricultural Teaching.

In the second half of the XIX<sup>th</sup> century, France was becoming industrialised. To facilitate for the young people from working class milieus preparation for their future, besides the apprenticeship track, professional teaching was beginning to be given in school establishments. Likewise, in establishments at the secondary level, a kind of "technical" teaching was beginning. These forms of teaching were developed at the start of the XX<sup>th</sup> century with the second industrial revolution based on the use of electricity and petroleum.

In 1919, the Astier Law organised Technical Education in France. What was most significant about this law was that, while maintaining the traditional apprenticeship system it allowed for the provision of professional training for the young in school establishments, whether they were part of Public Education or belonged to "recognised" private schools, because of initiatives already taken in this area by these types of establishments. By such an organisation of Technical Education, France differentiated itself from other countries such as Germany and Switzerland, which continued to give a privileged place to professional training through apprenticeships. The Astier Law began to bear fruit in the period between the two wars. But it was especially after the Second World War, in the reconstruction phase of the country and the time of prosperity that followed, that technical training experienced a very strong expansion in France.

This was the framework within which the action of the Brothers took place during the different periods that have been referred to. The first part of the present study is made up of a recollection of what their contribution was to the birth and progress of technical training from the XVIII<sup>th</sup> century to the middle of the XX<sup>th</sup> century. The second part sets out more especially to highlight the part they played in the expansion of this form of teaching after the Second World War.

However, before tackling the first of these two aspects, a clarification has to be made. Whether it be in the general title of the present booklet or in that of the two parts of the report, it is "Technical Education" that is under consideration. This is an expression embracing various types of training intended to prepare young people for their working future. Thus this expression encompasses what has already been referred to as "vocational training" and to what can be called "technical" secondary teaching. The two are differentiated by the fact that the first is more practical and that the second, presently called "technological training" is more theoretical.

# 1. The Brothers and the beginnings of Technical Education in France

## The last part of the XVII<sup>th</sup> century and the XVIII<sup>th</sup> century

From the beginning of their Institute, the Brothers have carried out their operations in the school area. On the other hand, they did not fit into the system of training by means of apprenticeships which came under the guilds of tradesmen. But for all that, they were not unmindful of the futures of their students. In his thesis, André Prévot could write: 'With John Baptist de La Salle teaching took on a clearly marked utilitarian character. Teaching is thought of as preparing for the future. Now, as soon as one thought of the future for the poor, it was not thought of otherwise than in terms of a trade (p.13). For example, the *Conduct of Christian Schools*, written by John Baptist de La Salle to be used as a teaching guide for the Brothers, made provision that the more advanced students be taught a rapid kind of writing while copying 'hand-written documents, otherwise called registers, especially summonses, leases, legal contracts of various kinds' (cited on p. 15).

When in 1688, the Brothers arrived in Paris to take over the school in the parish of St Sulpice, this school included a workshop where the students worked for part of the day. The aim, according to the ideas of those times, was to teach the children to avoid idleness by applying themselves to a job, and not to introduce them to a trade. On the other hand, when at the request of the Parish priest of Saint Sulpice, the Founder of the Brothers set up in 1689 a Sunday school called a "Christian academy" for "young persons who were not over twenty years of age" (Cahier Lasallien 7, 359) it was more directly aimed at vocational training. Indeed, 'The less advanced learned how to read and write. The others were taught Arithmetic, and, to some, Drawing' (A. Prévot, p.15). But this creation did not last.

When, in 1705, J. B. de La Salle decided to establish the centre of his Institute in Rouen in the house of St Yon, he did not delay in agreeing to receive as boarders, boys from well-off families in the



town and surrounding countryside. The desire of the parents was not only that their children receive a good Christian education, but that they be prepared for the profession they themselves followed, this profession being mainly one or other connected with commerce. The Brothers had to devise suitable tuition. This teaching, being practical as well as theoretical, prefigured what would ultimately become known as secondary “technical” teaching.

After the death of their Founder, in 1719, and up to the Revolution of 1789, the Brothers kept up their work in a manner rather like the one that has just been touched on rapidly. Actively involved, for the most part, in primary schools, they continued to think of the teaching they gave their students as a means of preparing them for their working future. They always remained outside the system of vocational training based on apprenticeship upon which a certain number who had been their students embarked following their schooling.

In the XVIII<sup>th</sup> century, some Brothers - with a maximum of six at the one time - were responsible, in the General Hospitals in Rouen, Avignon and Grenoble for the abandoned boys who were taken in there. Within their remit, the Brothers had to supervise the boys in the workshops where they performed various tasks making textiles. As in the parish school in Saint Sulpice the intention was to get them used to work and not to make them into tradesmen. The proof of this is that, subsequently, a certain number of these boys started apprenticeships paid for by some generous person or by a charitable organisation.

Throughout the XVIII<sup>th</sup> century, in some of their schools, the Brothers started “special classes” in which, after the elementary classes, the students received a more advanced training. This training was directed towards the exercise of professions connected with local activity. Such was the case, more particularly, in the ports where this activity was focused on commercial transactions: trade, sea traffic. Thus:

- In Boulogne sur Mer, a class like this, opened in 1744, gave instruction of a commercial kind.
- In Brest, Vannes, Lorient and Saint Malo, courses in ‘hydrography, navigation and mathematics were provided’ (A. Prévot, 45).

Elsewhere, similar classes prepared for trades connected with commerce and civil engineering: building, road networks.

- In 1753 a benefactress provided the allowance needed for the upkeep of a Brother destined to teach Drawing in the principal school in the parish of Saint Sulpice.
- In Cahors, a Brother arrived in 1763 to teach “architecture and planimetry”.
- In Castres, from 1769, commercial arithmetic, bookkeeping and practical geometry were taught.

As in the former “Sunday school”, the teaching given in these “special classes” had a vocational character.

At the same time, the Brothers opened a dozen boarding schools on the model of the one at St Yon. The objectives as far as the teaching was concerned remained the same as for the latter. As in the “special classes” the training given had a connection with the local economic activity.

- In the ports, as in Marseilles, Nantes, the training was mainly to sail ships in the coastal trade.
- In the principal boarding schools, the training given was related mainly to commerce. Often training in surveying and architecture was introduced. This was also the case in the College of Saint Victor, in Fort-de-France (Martinique) for which the Brothers became responsible in 1777.

In the education provided in these boarding schools, attention was given to practical applications, but the teaching of theory was more advanced in them and had more of a scientific character than in the special classes. In this the Brothers joined with those who, at that time, advocated the establishment of that kind of teaching in the colleges.

## XIX<sup>th</sup> century

By the end of the Revolution, the progress achieved in the course of the XVIII<sup>th</sup> century in the field of schooling for the children of the working class was practically wiped out. A new effort had to be made in view of again extending schooling. When Napoleon Bonaparte undertook the reorganisation of education in France, he was assured, as far as primary schools were concerned, of the

cooperation of the Brothers of the Christian Schools who were gathering together again after their dispersion during the Revolution and who were attracting new members. Under the restored monarchy, they continued to take part in re-establishing a network of elementary schools. During this time, the Brothers again took up their teaching on the same bases as in the XVIII<sup>th</sup> century. The *Conduct of Christian Schools* was re-edited as early as 1811. It was revised in 1834 to take account of the Guizot Law of 1833. Thus it was that, more particularly, what was known as 'linear' - or more precisely geometrical - drawing was introduced into the curriculum for primary classes. On the other hand, the objectives stated by the Brothers for their teaching were not modified, and so they continued to look upon it as a means of preparing for the working future of their pupils.

For the Brothers, indeed, the training they were giving was a direct preparation for their pupils' entry into their working life. Regardless of whether it was primary schools or even boarding schools, it was not foreseen that the pupils would go on to further studies. In the countries into which the Institute was beginning to expand, the Brothers, often coming from France, were spreading this model. When, on the other hand, some Brothers, towards the middle of the century, arrived in the United States, they were quickly led, at the request of some bishops, to provide, beyond primary classes, teaching in preparation for entry into the seminaries - corresponding to what in France were called Major Seminaries - or into universities. For this reason they introduced the teaching of the classical languages, Latin and Greek. In the last years of the century, that led to grave tension with the Superiors of the Institute who had every intention of suppressing that exception and returning to the narrow application of the Rule which forbade the Brothers to study or teach Latin.

Also, training for the various trades remained based upon apprenticeship, even though the Revolution had suppressed the guilds. As in the XVIII<sup>th</sup> century, the Brothers remained outside this system of training. However, from the years of the 1830s, they opened in various working-class centres evening classes for adults in which the latter received academic and vocational training. Brother

Philippe (Matthieu Bransiet), at the time Principal of Saint Nicolas des Champs, in Paris, gave a real boost to those adult courses for which he composed an *Abridged practical geometry applied to linear drawing*.

After being named head of the Institute, in 1838, Brother Philippe was just as mindful of the situation of young apprentices. A Christian layman, Albert de Mun, sought the support of the Institute for a "Work for apprentices and workmen". The voluntary members of this charity formed "Committees of Patrons" which placed apprentices with reliable bosses and went and visited them in their places of work. For their part, the Brothers organised evening courses for these apprentices and gathered them together on Sundays to facilitate their practice of religion and to offer them some recreation. In Paris, the Brothers also took charge of a "house for apprentices" where accommodation was provided for those admitted and where a certain number of the latter received their professional formation while others went off to some bosses.

During the period when Brother Philippe was at the head of the Institute (1838-1874), in a certain number of schools, "complementary teaching" of a practical nature was established in some classes going further than the elementary stage. For example:

- In 1837, at Montpellier, a class was opened to prepare for entry into the "Arts and Crafts" schools set up by the public authorities.
- An agricultural course was established in 1843, at Quimper, in the establishment known as "les Likès".
- In 1853, a class for drawing was opened in Saint Omer.

Moreover, specialist establishments in various professional areas saw the light of day. Thus:

- In Paris, a commercial course started in 1843 in the rue des Franc-Bourgeois.
- In Lyons, 'a special school, recruited from amongst the brightest pupils, was opened in 1849' (Archives of the District of France *Historical notes of the District of Lyons*).
- About 1844, the Brothers were called to Saulsaie, close to Lyons, to provide the teaching in a "Royal Agricultural Institute".

- In 1859, the Brothers became responsible for two establishments (Vaugirard and Issy-les-Moulineaux) which, at the time, made up the “Work of Saint Nicholas” founded by an ecclesiastic and, where boys in difficult family situations were trained in various trades connected with industry or agriculture. In 1863 was added to these a horticultural establishment already in existence at Igny where the Brothers had arrived in 1860 (cf. G. Rigault V, 413).

After an eclipse of about forty years, the Brothers again opened some boarding schools. The first was that at Béziers, in 1831. The one at Passy, at the gates of Paris, began in 1838. At Lyons, in 1839, a boarding school was started in the former house of the Lazaristes, whence the name of the establishment. The opening of boarding schools run by the Brothers in places which had previously had them such as Marseilles and Nantes, or in new places followed one after the other. Boarding-type establishments, along with the training courses which served as a model for the “secondary special” set up by the minister Duruy in 1865, offered other courses directed towards different trades in the main occupational areas: commercial, industrial and agricultural. This teaching could be of a rather professional nature, from the fact that it prepared directly for a trade, or secondary “technical”, to the extent that the theoretical education was more important and that it could issue in entry to establishments of advanced technical teaching: Schools of Mines, of Bridges and Roadways, and of Arts and Crafts.

In the last quarter of the XIX<sup>th</sup> century, between 1886 and 1891, the Brothers were progressively excluded from public schools in France. However, they could continue their activities in private schools. This situation led to the opening of small boarding schools. Often, the latter like other schools, comprised one class, sometimes several, in which practical training was given in various areas. The training given like that contributed to raising the level of training for those who had the benefit of it, and, by that means, to the development of regions, more particularly rural areas, where the schools in question were situated.

Beside the existing establishments, among which were the boarding schools, the Brothers opened others, at different levels, to give what could then be called “professional training” or a secondary

“technical” training, without it being always possible to clearly distinguish the two.

Commercial teaching continued to hold an important place in the Brothers’ establishments:

- In the years of the 1880s, the Brothers ran, in Paris, four commercial schools called “advanced” whose programmes extended over two years.
- In Lille, in 1880, a “Catholic Commercial School” was opened. This important establishment allowed for three years of studies.

In 1900, the Brothers were offering commercial teaching in 82 schools.

Being in touch with trade, in the various ports, the Brothers continued encouraging the access of their pupils to the navy, thus:

- In Lorient from 1873 to 1880, they had charge of the port’s school for apprentices.
- Other establishments were opened: Paimpol (1892), Saint Malo (1893) and Brest (1896).

Industrial teaching took on importance with the progress of industrialisation in France. It expanded in the Brothers’ establishments.

- In Lyons, in view of giving technical training impregnated by faith, De La Salle School was opened in 1880.
- In the school of Sainte Barbe in Saint Etienne, at the same time that the pupils followed the general teaching in the school, they received practical training in the workshops of manufacturers and tradesmen. In the same city, a course set up by Brother Rodolfo (Jean-Achille Sogno) was preparation for the School of Mines.
- In Douai (North), a professional course was created in 1875, in the Brothers school, for the purpose of forming “good Christian workers”.
- In Rheims, workshops were opened in 1880 and, in 1894, an advanced industrial stream was started.
- Similar kinds of schools were started in Aix-en-Provence, Toulon, Roanne (Loire) and Fourchambault (Nièvre).

Various establishments prepared for entry into Schools of Arts and Crafts intended to train foremen or those ‘second in charge’ of

industrial firms. In Lille, there was a plan to open a Catholic school like this and entrust it to the Brothers of the Christian Schools, but they declined it. Eventually an identical plan succeeded in Rheims, in 1900.

Agricultural training enjoyed fresh developments among the Brothers:

- Agricultural courses were started in various boarding schools like those of La Roche sur Yon (Vendée), Longuyon (Meurthe et Moselle) which continued the one at Beauregard near Thionville, closed in 1874, following the annexation of the Department of Moselle by the German Empire.
- The orphanage at Limoux (Aude), taken in charge by the Brothers in 1872, became a real agricultural school towards the end of the century. The institution at Limonest, near Lyons, was handed over to the Brothers in 1895.

The Director of the establishment in Laurac, Brother Serdieu, introduced American grape varieties to counter the effects of phylloxera, he fought the silk worm disease thanks to the advice of Pasteur. Moreover, the Agricultural Institute in Beauvais, opened in 1855, to train farmers and teachers of agriculture, continued to offer teaching at an advanced level. In 1900, among the Brothers' establishments, 12 special schools and numerous specialist streams offered instruction in agriculture.

## First half of the XX<sup>th</sup> century

The year 1900 marked a sort of pinnacle for the Institute of Brothers of the Christian Schools. Its Founder was canonised. At the universal exhibition in Paris, the Brothers' establishments received numerous rewards, especially for their achievements in the practical domain. But the law of 7 July 1904 which forbade members of religious Congregations to teach in France and anticipated the closure of the Brothers' establishments within ten years, led to the eclipse of the Institute in the country. Some Brothers who no longer gave any external signs of their religious character continued however to run a certain number of institutions. So it was that several of these, which ensured professional secondary technical training, were maintained. Other Brothers transferred or even opened establishments in neighbouring countries. Such was

the case, for example, with the Rheims School of Arts and Crafts which, in 1911, was established in Erquelines, in Belgium. Brothers who emigrated to countries where the Institute already had a presence or who implanted it in other ones, continued to spread what could be called the 'French model' when it comes to the connection between the instruction given by the Brothers and the preparation of their pupils for working life.

After the First World War (1914-1918), the Brothers were again in a more normal situation in France, even if the 1904 law was not repealed. The 1919 law organising technical teaching encouraged the maintaining of existing establishments and taking charge of a certain number of new ones. Above all, it was an opportunity for multiplying workshops intended to give a professional training to pupils who had completed their primary studies. Already, since the end of the XIX<sup>th</sup> century, such workshops had been begun in establishments run by the Brothers in order to give supplementary training to the pupils who were following an advanced primary course. Those establishments that survived took on the new courses. Others which had disappeared, mainly as a result of the 1904 law, were restarted with the same aim - for example at Douai, in 1937. Others were set up - as in Dole (Jura) in 1919. Those workshops were generally designed for working wood or metal using hand tools; however, certain ones were beginning to acquire machines. Also, some commercial departments, equipped with typewriters of the period, were started. This new development that was taking shape was cut short by the Second World War which broke out in 1939. The end of that conflict, in 1945, was to be followed by extensive expansion which requires description.



## 2. The Brothers and the development of Technical Teaching, in France, after the Second World War

At the end of the XIX<sup>th</sup> century and in the first half of the XX<sup>th</sup>, the care the Brothers took to prepare their pupils for their working life took the form, mainly, of introducing commercial and secondary technical training into some of their establishments. After the 1904 law, some "secularised" Brothers had maintained a proportion of these establishments. Following on from the Astier Law of 1919 which organised Technical Teaching in France, the Brothers had opened or taken charge of some officially "recognised" Centres or Schools for Apprentices, or they had increased workshops intended to give their pupils technical training. This investment of the Brothers was continued even during the Second World War.

However, it was especially during the forty years following 1945 that, in the establishments run by the Brothers, Technical Teaching, mainly in the form of Professional Training was organised and developed. In addition, during the same years, Brothers took part in the formation effort carried out in the Institute and more widely within Private Technical Teaching to improve the qualifications of the Brothers and Lay Teachers assigned to this type of teaching. A new phase opened, about 1985, with the responsibility for the Brothers' establishments being taken over more and more completely by Lay Persons. During this new phase, the expansion of those that offered technical training continued. But this expansion was characterised, particularly, by a rise in the level of training given to pupils or students.

In the study which follows, we shall keep to industrial and commercial teaching. Mention will not be made of agricultural training except indirectly. The latter would, indeed, call for a study of its own in so far as it concerned the Brothers' establishments. Moreover this kind of education comes under its own legislation.

## Organisation of Technical Teaching in the “Brothers” establishments, in France, after the war (1945-1965)

The war which came to an end in 1945 had repercussions on the Brothers, more especially in France. In addition, in the same country, the changes introduced by extending schooling and the law granting assistance to Private Teaching had, from 1960 onwards, consequences the effects of which the Brothers felt in their establishments, especially those offering technical training.

### – Repercussions of the war

When the war came to an end the country was impoverished. The restrictions due to the war were still felt for some years after it ended. One section of the population was destitute, many other persons had seen their standard of living lowered. The country had its mind on reconstruction after the destruction inflicted on it and the plundering of its resources by the occupier.

In addition, ‘a new kind of mission took hold of the Church in France under pressure from strong personalities’ (Lasallian Educational Activity no. 47, 13): Abbé Godin wrote: *France, a mission country* which reveals the state of advanced dechristianisation of certain milieus or different regions. That was the moment when the “French Mission” started. These initiatives were encouraged particularly by Cardinal Suhard, Archbishop of Paris.

### ***Institutional aspects***

In this period, it appeared to a certain number of Brothers cognisant of the realities of the moment that technical teaching, especially in the form of professional training, was a means of enabling young people to achieve a more secure future, while at the same time contributing to the rebuilding of the country. Superiors shared this point of view. So it was that before the General Chapter of 1956, Brother Denis, Vicar General, then in charge of the Institute, addressed a letter to the Brothers Visitors reminding them of the relevance of professional and technical teaching (cf. Archives of the District of France, Series L, box 13). Within such a perspective, in the eyes of the Principals of establishments and of those in charge of technical departments or workshops it seemed necessary to structure and expand the often

embryonic achievements inherited from the past. It was also necessary to give a better formation to the Brothers assigned to it.

In the years following the Second World War, the most characteristic feature of the Brothers' establishments was certainly, indeed, the transformation of numerous practical teaching departments started between the wars, into Private Technical Schools (ETP) enjoying official recognition. The transformation of the majority of these professional departments was effected in 1950. Similarly, some establishments were internally modified by developing technical training; such was the case, for example, in Saint Denis, in the Paris region. Most often, the new ETPs were incorporated into establishments offering other kinds of studies. So it was that in the establishments in Brittany, such as those in Lorient and Quimper, which had obtained official recognition before the war, such departments tended to take on increasing importance. At other times, it could be the case with independent establishments, such as the Saint Joseph Apprenticeship School in Troyes opened in 1921 by the Diocese and entrusted to the Brothers in 1940. This school, in spite of its name guaranteed practical training in its own workshops, contrary to the traditional apprenticeship system which survived in its own right. However, at the same time, a certain number of professional training departments previously started disappeared for various reasons.

The Private Technical Schools (ETP) that became "recognised" could also officially receive a share of the financial contribution called the "Apprenticeship Tax" started in 1925 and which businesses had to make for professional training. Although insufficient, such assistance enabled the establishments to function more easily and to become better equipped. In all those that offered a professional course there was preparation, over the three years after the CEP (Certificate of Primary Studies) which terminated the primary classes, for a greater or less number of CAP (Certificate of Professional Competence) mostly in the industrial area but likewise in the commercial sector. In a certain number of ETPs preparation for the BEI (Industrial Training Certificate) or the BEC (Commercial Training Certificate) was added. These were four year courses started after the second year of secondary studies. Some establishments with secondary courses, in addition, prepared students for the MT Baccalaureat (Maths and Technical Studies).

Some data referring to the year 1958 give an easy insight into how the Brothers' establishments fitted into the general organisation of professional training in France about 1960. A study on *Technical teaching, in France, and the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools* was the object of a special number of the Bulletin *Entre Nous* published by the National Secretariat of the Institute. It enables us to establish the following table and to insert the attached map. The numbers given in the table correspond to the number of school units required for each course; the same establishment could comprise several courses. There were about fifty of these establishments in all.



| Level of qualification of course | Kinds of private establishments              | Examinations           | Number  |
|----------------------------------|--|------------------------|---------|
| Qualified workmen                | Professional or Apprenticeship schools       | CAP                    | 6       |
|                                  | Private Technical Schools                    | CAP                    | 48      |
| Middle management                | Private Technical Schools                    | BEI - BEC              | 22 - 12 |
| Technicians                      | Establishments similar to Technical Colleges | Technician Certificate | 1       |
|                                  | Secondary establishments                     | Bacc. M.T.             | 11      |
| Engineers                        | Recognised Engineering School                | Dip. Engineer          | 1       |

During this period, agricultural training kept functioning according to a previous organisation. In 1960, a new law was passed but it was not implemented straightaway. So a list of the Brothers' establishments in which agricultural training was offered, dated December 1961, tells us that, at that time, among these establishments, could be counted:

- 1: of advanced training (Beauvais)
- 4: offering what was called "second level" teaching
- 22: called "Agricultural Apprenticeship Centres"
- 5: entitled "Post-school Agricultural Courses".

Thus it can be seen that the Brothers offered agricultural training mainly at a level corresponding to technical departments preparing for the CAP. In many cases, however, this teaching had already replaced "winter courses" which lasted from All Saints to Easter.

The structure operating in Technical Teaching was accompanied by an effort to train Brothers who had been assigned to it often without any particular preparation. Thus, shortly after the Second World War, professional training was organised mainly in the

Districts of Rheims and Besançon, for the benefit of Brothers in charge of professional departments in a certain number of establishments. Such a training session took place at Saint Joseph's Apprenticeship School in Troyes in 1947. In 1948, at Saint Joseph's in Dijon, for six weeks about sixty Brothers coming from different regions in France were introduced to practical work in the areas of fitting and turning, blacksmithing, model making, carpentry and industrial designing. At the same time the Superiors were giving thought to preparing Brothers to become Heads of Works - in charge of workshops - by getting them to acquire the Diploma in Engineering, at ECAM (Catholic School of Arts and Crafts) in Lyons. When these Brothers took up their posts, they organised improvement sessions for their confreres in charge, mainly, of conducting "general technology" courses which rounded off the training given students, in the workshops, by the teachers of practical skills.

### ***Apostolic dimension***

In the technical departments, Brothers offered general teaching or theoretical technical teaching, in particular in the form of industrial design. These Brothers brought to their new field of endeavour the methods previously acquired, principally in teaching the upper primary classes. At the apostolic level, they made use of the means traditionally used to reach the pupils: catechism, religious practices. And some were inspired by Catholic Action.

However, some of these Brothers, and others with them, appeared more mindful of the changes resulting from or demonstrated in war. Several could have become aware of them during the war, while the younger ones made the discovery when, between 1954 and 1962, they were called up to take part in the war in Algeria. The consequences of this realisation were brought to light by Brother Nicolas Capelle in number 47 of the studies which appeared under the title: Lasallian Educational Action. It seems that the following borrowings can be made here.

From 1945-46, these Brothers 'are going to form themselves into teams for work and research in the Workers' Milieu...Little by little, their group is going to be of interest to the Brothers working in Technical Schools: these latter are in contact with the young people in the Workers Milieu' (AEL no.47, 14)... The approach taken by these Brothers is significant.

- It 'is first of all spiritual. It is a matter of forming Christian workmen who can be apostles in their milieu' (p.15).
- These young people are known by the J.O.C. (Young Christian Workers), The Brothers are taking a leaf out of their book.
- In several technical establishments Educators practise the 'SEE, JUDGE, ACT of the Movement...' (p.16)

This group was organised with the approval of those in charge of the Institute. But 'the main body of the Institute in France cannot see itself using this approach and tends to marginalise it' (p.15).

### – **Influence of these developments in the school domain**

In France, for Private Education - made up mostly of Catholic Education - the passing of what is known as the Debré Law constitutes an important turning point. This law provides, in effect, that, to the extent that a Private Teaching Establishment enters into a "contract of association" with the State, the latter becomes responsible for the salaries of the teachers and allocates to that establishment funds intended to cover the costs of teaching. Passed on 31 December 1959, the law was implemented from the start of 1960. As far as Private Teaching Establishments were concerned, the assistance received enabled them not only to secure their future but also to work under better conditions and to expand.

The law, on the other hand, arrived just at the time of what was called "the school explosion". In 1959, age of compulsory schooling was extended to 16 years of age and, henceforth, a growing number of young persons prolonged their schooling beyond that age. When the Brothers ran only primary classes, they were forced to complete them by those of the CEG (College of General Education) or to replace by these four years of study, the three of advanced primary teaching which they already guaranteed in some of their schools. In technical teaching establishments they had to multiply and diversify the options they offered in the area of professional training or in their technical training classes. In certain places, that ended in the setting up of important establishments offering a range of different kinds of training. In other cases, they abandoned certain kinds of training to set up establishments giving only professional training, as was the case, for example, in the District of Besançon.

At the same time, the law passed on 2 October 1960 was aimed at adapting agricultural training to the extension of schooling. The feature of this law was to place this kind of teaching under the supervision of the Ministry of Agriculture and to organise the links between public and private training. An implementing decree in June 1961 aimed at harmonising the organisation of the teaching of agriculture with general or technical teaching. With this in view, agricultural studies were split, from 4<sup>th</sup> class (aged about 14) onwards into:

- Cycle I: preparing, in 3 years for the BAA (Agricultural Apprenticeship Certificate).
- Cycle II: preparing in 3 years for the BEA (Agricultural Studies Certificate) and in 4 years for the BATA (Skilled Agricultural Employee Certificate).
- Cycle III: preparing in 5 years for the BTA (Agricultural Technician Certificate).

Some Agricultural Colleges were to include cycles I and II, and some Agricultural High Schools cycles II and III, eventually attaching to it preparation for the BTSA (Advanced Agricultural Technician Certificate). Public and private establishments had to opt for one or other of these two classifications. In Private Education and, within this, among the Brothers, the form of College rather than High School was adopted.

In 1965, the Brother Visitors of the French Districts drew up a plan to avoid uncontrolled expansion of all the institutions run by the Brothers concentrating on certain ones of these as well as on kinds of education more in line with the finality of the Institute. Because of this, the plan favoured technical, including agricultural, establishments and more particularly those that provided vocational training. Such a plan was likely to guide those in charge of the Institute when they took part in the revision of the distribution of schools in Catholic Education at the diocesan or local level.

## **Expansion of technical training in “Brothers” establishments (1966-1985)**

The second half of the 1960s was marked for the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools by the General Chapter of 1966 and its prolongation into 1967. This Chapter, in particular, invit-



ed the Brothers to become more involved in what, from then on, was called “the educational service of the poor”. Diverse kinds of options were opened up in the Institute.

At the same time, the application of the Debré Law caused an expansion of technical teaching, especially noticeable in the Brothers’ establishments. It also led the latter to put a lot of effort into forming teachers not only for their own establishments but also for the whole of Private Technical Education.

– **Options for the Brothers in relation to “the educational service of the poor”**

The General Chapter in 1966, and even more its extension into 1967, had for the Institute of the Brothers an impact comparable with that of the Second Vatican Council for the Catholic Church. In accordance with the text implementing the conciliar Decree *Perfectae Caritatis*, on the “Adapted renewal of the religious life”, the Chapter revised the Rules of the Institute. In view of stimulating greater fidelity to the original inspiration of the Institute, the Chapter asked the Brothers to devote themselves more to the poor. By inventing the expression “the educational service of the poor” to define the mission to which the Brothers vowed themselves, it got the Institute out of the impasse it had been in from the time when it was no longer possible to apply, in an absolute manner, the principle of gratuity, thanks to which it wished that at least all primary schools, would be accessible to young people of every type of economic and social condition. On the other hand, by inviting the Brothers to carry out this service not only amongst the “poor” but also the “very poor”, it offered, in fact, to the Brothers various options related to the manner in which they responded to the Chapter’s invitation.

Mr François Velut in his book *Saint Joseph’s in Troyes*, an institution in which he taught and of which he was Principal, highlighted very well the alternative confronting the Brothers, when he wrote:

“For some, in this post-Council period, the presence of the Brothers is perhaps more useful in disadvantaged areas rather than in School.” [Then he touches on another possibility which has scarcely been mentioned, and continues] “Others cannot imagine giving up this service of the Church and the Nation [Catholic

Education] of the young, particularly the most underprivileged...” (p.p.134-135).

With the Chapter launching an appeal to go: “To the most deprived” some Brothers thought that the environment of school institutions was not conducive to reaching them. To sum up the reasoning of these Brothers, it seems best to cite again a few passages from No. 47 of Lasallian Educational Action (p.p.16, 17).

- ‘Little by little these Brothers were to join youth or adult Worker Organisations which the worker movement has set up for itself. Their understanding was that the Education of the worker milieu should be given within the worker milieu, through organisations set up by that milieu’...
- ‘Without withdrawing from the F.S.C. Institute to which they were bound, these Brothers anticipated movements to try out living in the working class milieu and be better able to tell how it should be evangelised today...’
- ‘In this apprenticeship, they make contact with the “bad life” (housing, work, wages, food, clothing, leisure, getting set up...). They realise little by little that a certain “capillarity” is indispensable and preliminary to any action and to sharing in the solidarity which they discover in the working class milieu’.
- ‘Many take advantage of long retraining courses... to become “part of the scene”, meaning to change their professional standing, to leave behind the role of teacher, to leave behind the protection of the community in order to live a different housing reality, one of uncertain employment; to experience the shock of everyday problems which is the common lot’.
- ‘Moreover, some were to agree to go further, to experiencing themselves the living conditions of the working class...’
- ‘But wherever they go, whatever they do, they remain educators...’
- ‘But they all remain embedded in the working milieu and can no longer think of living apart in monastic communities; their setting is the working class area (Nimes, Roubaix, Nantes, Dijon, Paris...). That is where they see themselves, that is where they are known’.

Some of these Brothers continued teaching in Institute establishments but preferably in classes intended for students experiencing

greater difficulties. For several, a posting in Public Education appeared to be a means of reaching "the poorest". One Brother Director planned the "integration" of his school, in the way the Debré Law allowed it. After the political change in 1981, some Brothers joining other teachers in Private Education, hoped for the entrance of the latter into the public service as a single teaching unit. Some Brothers, for their part, were working as chaplains in Public Education.

Other Brothers mindful of the appeal made to them, also wished to respond but while remaining within the framework of the Institute's teaching establishments. They did not take the same approach as the preceding ones. For them it was a matter of taking care of children from families of workers in industry, of employees in various services, of small tradesmen, traders or farmers. These families, in the main, usually enjoyed a suitable standard of living, but amongst them were some who put up with less satisfactory living conditions, because, for example, of insufficient professional qualifications, a low level of culture, or recent immigration... In addition, the situation of both kinds were constantly threatened by misfortunes such as: unemployment, sickness, accidents - and that in spite of welfare protection - or again: death, separation from a spouse... when it was not alcoholism, the tendency to take on ill-advised expenses... As regards the young, by reason of the repercussions of one or other of these hazards of life or simply from a lack of interest in too theoretical a teaching, they could already experience failure in primary school or college. These young people are then readily "directed" into vocational training. They themselves are often interested in a more concrete education and their parents accept - more easily than those engaged in professions requiring a higher intellectual level - that their children look to professions connected with the ones they themselves are engaged in. So it is that, in France, such children are numerous in vocational establishments.

The Brothers taking an interest particularly in these young people with the aim of helping them to regain confidence in themselves and to give meaning to their lives, all the while getting them to acquire a professional qualification likely to enable them, later on, to be less subject to the risks of too unpredictable a situation. Among these Brothers were also some who were especially careful to give a human and Christian education to their students.

They did this by means of catechesis - a renewed form of the catechism - or more limited meetings when the difficulty of reaching young people with a great variety of religious ties is more marked. For their part, the Brothers committed in this way to young people in technical education belong to the group which, since 1974, go by the name of Brothers in the Workers World (FMO) - its equivalent in the rural setting is Brothers in the Rural World - to mark their membership of these milieus.

### **– Participation of the Brothers in the development of Technical Training**

As far as school establishments were concerned, the conditions laid down to benefit from the Debré Law made it compulsory to form sufficiently large groups of pupils and to submit to testing of the teaching given. In return, these conditions made it very easy to start new classes or new training courses, so long as it was possible to justify having the desired pupils and teachers. In Technical Education that opened the possibility of adapting to the locally-felt needs. More particularly, in Professional Training there resulted a dynamism which translated into diversification and multiplication of training courses offered to the young, but likewise to the suppression of certain others which had become unsuitable.

For its part, private agricultural training experienced a 'boom due, more particularly, to the ties linking it to the agricultural profession the managers of which often came from the JAC... and to taking a larger and larger proportion of pupils failing at school' (*Agricultural Training: 150 years of history*, 127, 128). It ended up having more than half the number of pupils in Agricultural Training, in France. However, in the 1970s, the schools were beginning to experience difficulties, in particular of a financial nature, related often to the fact that, being limited to the College level, they could not offer the pupils who so desired, the possibility of continuing on to High School.

The favourable situation that, on the whole, Private Education experienced in the 1960s and 1970s, extended into the first half of the 1980s. The change in political trends occurring in 1981, in fact, did not produce appreciable changes in Private Education establishments where the arrangements of the Debré Law contin-

ued to be applied as formerly. On the other hand, the determination of the ruling power of the day to include Private Education in a unified public teaching service presented a threat to freedom of teaching that the demonstration of 24 June 1984 removed.

In their schools, the Brothers shared the dynamism of which mention has just been made. This was the case, in particular, with the Principals who, in their establishments or in the groups to which they belonged within Private Technical Training were working to reach an increasing number of young people and always make a better response to the expectations of these youths and their parents. This also held good for Brothers exercising some responsibility or in touch with young people through teaching - including "practical" for certain ones of them.

However, if the Brothers were supplying the impetus, achieving the objectives being pursued was depending less and less on them, with their numbers tending to reduce. The Brothers who already, even before the Second World War, and notably in Technical Education, could no longer staff their establishments by themselves, had to appeal to an increasing number of men and women "lay" collaborators - in the sense in which the word is understood in the Church. Many of them came to share the motivation of the Brothers. This was the case, very particularly, for the Heads of establishments whom the Institute was beginning to appoint to replace the Brothers, for example in Troyes in 1973, in Dijon in 1974 and Brest in 1979. This was preparing for a change that could be placed about 1985 and to which we shall return after stopping to look at the participation of the Brothers in the training of teachers in Private Technical Education, in the years following 1960.

#### **– Contribution of the Brothers to the formation of Teachers of Technical Education**

While taking part in developing technical training in their own establishments the Brothers were careful to promote the training of those who were contributing to ensure this development.

Compared with the previous situation, from 1960 on the Debré Law introduced new conditions. Brother Claude Lapied, whose words we shall use to tell of the implication of the training of Teachers in Private Technical Education, wrote:

“From the time the Debré Law was implemented, the perspective on many things was going to change, not in the purpose of the school whose aim remained the education of the young for their professional life, with respect to moral, religious and Christian values, for which purpose the school had been established, but with all the qualities previously required, the conditions demanded by the contracts would make university and technical qualifications absolutely necessary...”

In the first place, to obtain the “definitive contract” which guaranteed the permanence of the responsibility of the State for their salaries, the Teachers in Private Education had to undergo an inspection. In the establishments for Technical Training that posed a problem especially for the teachers charged with the practical training of the students, who, coming from industrial firms or public services like the railways, had received only a perfunctory pedagogical training. These teachers also had to give proof of their ability to ensure the teaching of what was called “professional technology”. Anxious about such a situation, the Heads of Work, a group within CTPN (National Technical Pedagogical Committee) took the initiative of organising courses intended for these teachers for whom they had direct responsibility.

In addition, some teachers with responsibility for teaching “technical theory” through technical drawing or “general technology” were accepted in virtue of the Debré Law to sit competitive examinations which enabled them to be treated, for salary purposes, as certificated teachers in Public Education. Those who were successful in this examination had to undergo, two years later, a special inspection. Frequently the final result was not favourable because of lack of sufficient preparation. Teachers in Private Education were not, in fact, accepted into ENNA (National Apprenticeship Teachers Colleges) run by the State. Because of this, some teachers left Private Education for Public Education.

To respond to the needs of both these categories of teachers, consideration was first of all given to starting a Teacher Training College. But, given the urgency, the common sense decision was taken to give some help to teachers awaiting inspection. Meeting in September and October, the Heads of Work of establishments in the North-East of France proposed that one of them, Brother Jean-Claude Mauvilly, at the time in charge of the workshops at St

Joseph's in Dijon, take on the duties of CRP (Regional Pedagogical Counsellor) for their region. For their part, the Heads of Establishments set up a body intended to be the employer of this CRP and to guarantee him a salary. From September 1970, Brother J. Cl. Mauvilly visited the twenty or so Private Technical establishments in Champagne-Lorraine, Burgundy and the Franche-Comté as well as the Paris Region to follow the progress of the teachers responsible for technical subjects. The same role was entrusted to a Ploërmel Brother, Marcel Cornec, for the western part of France, to a Head of Work, from Saint Etienne, John Viart for the South-East and to Brother Joseph Bennes who carried out these duties for the South-West while remaining Head of Work at Saint Joseph's in Toulouse. The North had a slightly different organisation with a priest who had trained as an engineer. The activity of these various CRPs was especially decisive. In particular, it enabled persons who came into teaching on the strength of their professional qualifications to carry out competently the duties of teacher in Private Technical Teaching.

This method of formation was not, however, entirely satisfactory for the teachers who, after their success in a competitive examination, had to be prepared for the inspection intended to qualify them. Those who, after this success, opted for Private Teaching, not being admitted to ENNA, had to be offered some possibility of equivalent formation. To bring that about, Private Technical Teaching came, however, to prefer on-the-job formation. It alternated periods of formation at a specialised centre with time teaching in their schools. For persons responsible for families, it avoided being away too long. Research carried out to establish such a centre led to setting it up on Fourvière hill in Lyons.

What was called the National Training Centre of Private Technical Teaching (CNFETP) began operating in October 1972, under the leadership of Brother Claude Lapied, who belonged to the District of Rheims, The Centre had the benefit of the support of the CRPs, the Heads of Work or the Teachers and of various contributors. The participants were called upon to do four courses of 5 days each in the course of a year. And during these times they received their salaries and, eventually, there were even replacements for their teaching. At first the courses affected industrial training teachers, then they were extended to those men, and especially women, in tertiary teaching, clothing, personal or

group services. They were also opened to teachers in general teaching. More particularly, in 1982 and the years following, the Centre has organised a training course intended as preparation for internal examinations of teachers who, being unable to pass the usual competitive examinations, found themselves treated in the less prestigious category of "Assistant Teachers" by the State. The kind of training given at the Centre was widely appreciated, including by Inspectors of National Education of whom certain ones recognised the advantages of the alternative system of training. The Brothers were far from being the only ones to offer that training, but, for at least fifteen years, their cooperation was especially important to ensure that the Centre worked and to give it its direction.

### Technical Training in "Lasallian" establishments (1985-2005)

At a date which can be put at about 1985, the conjunction of diverse causes brought about an important modification for the establishments run by the Brothers, but also, in a more general way, for the establishments of Private Education. In the Brothers' establishments, the lessening of the number of active Brothers, which had already led to the entrusting of a certain number of establishments to Lay Principals, emphasised this movement and led to the withdrawal of Brothers from a certain number of places. To the extent that those who came after the Brothers continued to make reference to the educational system stemming from John Baptist de La Salle, the establishments thus taken over by laymen were henceforth known as "Lasallian establishments".

These latter, like all Private Education establishments, were subject to the consequences of the changes made in 1985 by the Ministry for National Education to the implementation measures of the Debré Law. If Private Education was not integrated into a unified public Service, from 1985, it was beginning to be squeezed into the straightjacket of the Public Teaching system. In particular, this had to put up with the limitations imposed in the allocation of teaching positions. It partly took away from technical establishments their capacity to respond to local conditions and could restrict their development. But at the same time, these establishments were dragged into the changes brought about by



the Ministry of Education, aimed at raising the standard of training given to the young.

Conversely, Agricultural Training benefited from the laws, known as the Rocard Laws, passed on 9 July 1984 for Public Education and the 31 December 1984 for Private Education. Establishments belonging to the latter saw themselves accepted into the public education and training service while keeping their uniqueness, to the extent that they were tied to the State by a common law contract. Even if the implementation of the laws sometimes entailed some risks, it was generally favourable to the development of the establishments which it enabled, individually, to raise the standard of training for their pupils or students. On the other hand, some establishments more susceptible to the effects of a decreasing number of rural workers, kept going with difficulty or even disappeared. So it is that the number of establishments in the Lasallian network offering agricultural instruction now stands at ten. It is true that a few others, formerly run by the Brothers had been transferred to some other “sponsorship” before the network was set up.

#### – **Technical training in the “Lasallian network”**

The Brothers had never been very numerous in technical schools. With the decrease in the number of Brothers they had to give up not only the management and supervision of such schools, but sometimes they had to withdraw completely. If the handing over to Catholic Education Offices of schools, until then belonging to religious Congregations, did not generally pose any problems when it was a matter of primary schools or small colleges, it was not the same in the case of sizeable establishments and especially when these provided technical instruction. That was a cause of worry to the Laymen to whom the Institute would transfer such establishments. This was the context in which the decision, taken by the Brothers of France, was reached to retain the “guardianship” of the Institute over all the Brothers’ establishments in the country (the Island of Reunion included); this was what, henceforth, was usually called the “Lasallian network”. In addition the CLF (French Lasallian Centre) started. This, under the guidance of former Assistant, Brother Patrice Marey, had as its aim to offer Lay Persons working in establishments within the Network a kind of formation that would enable them to take over from the Brothers,

by being in their turn part and parcel of the tradition inherited from John Baptist de La Salle.

This Chapter decision was important for the Brothers who thereby had hope of seeing continued the work to which they had dedicated themselves and for the Laypeople who found in this decision an assurance for the future. This was especially true for Technical Teaching which was at a point in time when it was necessary to commit to considerable investments in response to technological advances and at the same time undertake new buildings. And that, more so for the latter, in that, by virtue of the decentralising laws of 1983 and 1985, Technical Teaching establishments could hope to receive financial assistance from the Regions where these latter were disposed to grant it to them.

The “supervising” authority remained the Institute, but it transferred the exercise of this authority to the De La Salle Association, which comprised Brothers and Lay heads of establishments. “Exercising” this guardianship included looking for and appointing heads of establishments and monitoring the establishments as well as animating and training personnel who worked in them. It helped certain establishments to get through some bad patches. Most often it supported the expansion that many Lasallian establishments experienced, in spite of the limitations imposed by the academic administration, a development accompanied, in particular, in Technical Teaching, by raising the standard of the training given.

– **Raising the standard of training in Lasallian technical establishments**

If, from 1985 onwards, technical establishments, in particular, suffered from the new practical details for implementing the Debré Law, they have been able to have their pupils share in the raised level of formation recommended by the Ministry of Education. Such was the case, most especially in the years which interest us here, for the pupils attending what, from 1985 on, were called Professional High Schools. This kind of establishment, had already, in the previous years, passed progressively from admitting pupils from the age of 14, in the classes preparing, in three years, for a CAP (Professional Aptitude Certificate), to an entry about 16 years of age, with a view to obtaining a BEP (Professional Training Certificate), in two years. But about 1985,

there was the issue, in National Education, of raising the level of the professional qualification that the young could acquire by attending Professional High Schools.

To understand what was at stake, it must be known that, at least in France, in work circles 6 levels of “professional qualifications” were differentiated - the table on page 25 makes use, in part, of this classification. Levels 1 and 2 correspond to the professions taught in the Great Schools, the Universities and similar establishments. Level 3 was that of Higher Studies taught in IUTs (University Institutes of Technology) or in the departments of BTS (Advanced Technician Certificate) attached to the Technological High Schools. Level 4 was that of Technicians and corresponded to the various Baccalaureats or to training of an equivalent standard. Level 5 was that of qualified Tradesmen who had obtained a BEP or a CAP. Level 6 included those who could not give proof of a professional qualification. And now to return to what National Education had in mind. Those who, until then, gained a level 5 qualification, from now on, achieve level 4. The target aimed at was that, eventually, 80% of an age group receive training to the level of a baccalaureat and that the remaining 20% receive a level 5 qualification. What was in mind in the first instance was very poorly understood by many and the second objective was totally obscured, so that some 150,000 kept leaving the system, each year, without any professional qualification!

### ***Invention of professional baccalaureats***

From the perspective of what was really intended by the National Ministry of Education, a professional baccalaureat was invented and this was a two-year course of study after a BEP. That came down to setting up a baccalaureat comprising 4 years of study in place of the usual 3. The end sought was to give pupils a broader general education and to prepare professionals who were more independent in their work.

Lasallian establishments for Professional Training quickly took up the challenge. From the very first years after the invention of this new type of training, they started the required classes while committing to the costs of the necessary equipment. With the multiplication of such classes the actual result was that in these establishments there were scarcely any fields in the industrial, tertiary or service areas which were limited to the BEP. And this was even

more so, since, with certain of the latter not having been lengthened by a professional baccalaureat, classes preparing for a corresponding baccalaureat in technology were opened in the same establishments. In the past, a few young persons were already taking this pathway to continue their education, but from now on many, by one or other of the two strands offered, can acquire a level 4 professional qualification or even go further.

### ***Multiplication of BTS***

Another bridge was crossed when these same young people could reach level 3 of a qualification corresponding to training for Advanced Technician, either by preparing, over two years, for the Diploma awarded by the IUTs (University Institutes of Technology), or by the BTS (Advanced Technician Certificate) likewise after 2 years of study in departments attached to Technological High Schools. Private Education not being able to set up the first of these two strands developed the second, with a view, first of all, to give a follow-up to the Baccalaureats studied for in the Technological High Schools. It can be seen from Monographs that Lasallian establishments began opening BTS departments in the 1970s. Since then they have multiplied.

After the creation of the Professional Bacalaureats, attempts were made in some establishments to prepare for the BTS some students who had passed this type of examination. When this did not come within the National Education guidelines it was done within those of on-going formation; the official line then being that the Professional Baccalaureat was preparation for entry into the workforce, but not for further study. These attempts were not always crowned with success, the difficulties of going from one form of training to the other being underestimated by teachers as well as students.

More recently, with a change in its point of view by National Education, more and more young people, after gaining the Professional Baccalaureat, have been admitted into BTS departments already in existence or set up for them, including in some establishments which, for a long time, have been exclusively Professional High Schools.

Lasallian establishments were not the only ones pursuing such an objective as raising the standard of training, but they contributed

effectively to what affected students beginning their training in Professional High Schools. So it is that the following can be read in a brochure on *Saint Joseph's Boarding School in Toulouse*: 'Finding students flourishing today in BTS who had been enrolled, discouraged, in the CAP or BEP is a ringing endorsement of the hope that an open training can bring to young people having difficulty' (p.105). Now, less and less that has become something exceptional. Questioned on this matter, Mr Pierre Lecat, Principal of the Saint Joseph's Association in Dijon as well as his assistants in the technical sections of this association can testify that the BTS classes happen to be made up, to a large extent, of students following the BEP-Professional Bacc. strand, all the while gaining most satisfactory results. In the eyes of these persons, such an outcome is in conformity with the Lasallian character of their establishment.

### ***Accessing university education***

Some students, among those passing BTS (Bacc. + 2) wishing to continue their education with a view to gaining a diploma at Bacc. + 3, + 4 or +5, encounter difficulties in securing a place in corresponding courses in University. Faced with this situation, Mr Emile Bourdin, then Principal of the Lasallian High School in la Baronnerie, near Angers conceived the plan, in 1988, of starting a new strand specialising in the study of foreign languages, with extensive stays in various countries. So it was that ISAIP (Higher Institute of International Action and Production) leading to a diploma was born. This Institute was recognised by the State in 1994 at Bacc. + 5 level. For the purpose of going on to the level of Bacc. + 5, it was completed, from 1997, by ESAIP (Angers Advanced School of Information Technology and Industrial Automation) which awards a degree in Engineering recognised by the Certificated Engineers' Commission. Subsequently, other Private Teaching establishments set up departments affiliated to the ISAIP-ESAIP group, and this was the case with the Lasallian establishments at Dijon and Toulouse. In 2001, at its site in Angers, the group integrated some inadequate visual display units with the training for "Leader of International Project for Computers and Networks". So, it is becoming common knowledge that students on leaving Professional High Schools are pursuing their studies by such paths right up to the level of university diploma degrees.

But for a certain number of those who happen to follow such a school programme, we must go back to the time before the start of their professional training, properly so called, to see how attempts were made beforehand, to have them regain self-confidence even in classes such as those known for a long time as CPPN (Pre-Professional Level Classes) or, more recently, called 4<sup>th</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> "technology" (corresponding to the last two years of college). These latter classes, which those in charge of Lasallian Professional High Schools amongst others were very earnest to keep going and bring to success within their establishments, have now been replaced by others which have to be attached to colleges. However, as far as possible, especially when it is a matter of the same association, links are maintained between these classes and the Professional Training establishments.

One cannot, however, boast only of such results. For sure, as the young people who, meeting their former teacher, say: "fortunately, I have been to Sacré Coeur!" - according to the way of referring to the Lasallian technical establishment at Paray le Monial - many other former students of similar establishments can express their satisfaction at having attended them. But, alongside these latter, how many would not say as much? And what about the young ones who cannot even get into them? There can be rejoicing when boys or girls have gained a qualification which enables them to look to the future in a more favourable way, but for all that, are they open to values likely to give meaning to their lives? In this regard, it is significant to see how much the Heads of establishments who guide the actions that have just been described show concern in exercising the pastoral responsibility they have. For this purpose, these gather around themselves APS (School Pastoral Assistants)- some are Brothers - who are successful with pupils or students. The Heads also start Pastoral Care Centres or, again, erect chapels better adapted for modern usage than the old ones.

TECHNICAL EDUCATION  
IN THE LASALLIAN NETWORK  
IN FRANCE (2006-2007)

|    | <b>Fields</b> | <b>name</b>                      | <b>city</b>              | <b>legt</b> | <b>lpro</b> | <b>sup</b> | <b>cfa</b> | <b>cfc</b> |
|----|---------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------|-------------|------------|------------|------------|
| 1  | agricultural  | Kerplouz                         | AURAY                    | 45          | 265         | 130        | 97         | 57         |
| 2  | agricultural  | LaSalle Beauvais                 | BEAUVAIS                 | 0           | 0           | 1135       | 49         | 2          |
| 3  | agricultural  | Saint-Nicolas (lycée)            | IGNY                     | 240         | 0           | 0          | 0          | 1          |
| 4  | agricultural  | Sciences de la Vie & de la Terre | LE PUY-EN-VELAY          | 76          | 134         | 114        | 0          | 1          |
| 5  | agricultural  | Saint-Joseph (lycée agricole)    | LEVIER                   | 60          | 220         | 36         | 0          | 1          |
| 6  | agricultural  | Institut SANDAR                  | LIMONEST                 | 153         | 49          | 80         | 0          | 0          |
| 7  | agricultural  | Saint-Christophe                 | MASSEUBE                 | 86          | 201         | 69         | 0          | 1          |
| 8  | agricultural  | Montebourg                       | MONTEBOURG               | 0           | 148         | 0          | 0          | 1          |
| 9  | agricultural  | Saint-Antoine                    | SAINT-GENIS de SAINTONGE | 37          | 62          | 0          | 0          | 0          |
| 10 | agricultural  | Thillois                         | THILLOIS                 | 120         | 0           | 90         | 0          | 0          |
| 11 | industrial    | de La Salle                      | ALÈS                     | 378         | 580         | 72         | 0          | 1          |
| 12 | industrial    | St-Jean-Baptiste de la Salle     | AVIGNON                  | 194         | 219         | 92         | 0          | 1          |
| 13 | industrial    | Saint-Joseph Saint-Pierre        | CASTRES                  | 65          | 306         | 0          | 0          | 0          |



|    |            |                                 |                     |     |     |     |     |     |
|----|------------|---------------------------------|---------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 14 | industrial | Saint-Joseph                    | DIJON               | 668 | 635 | 60  | 44  | 150 |
| 15 | industrial | Saint-Nicolas AAPM              | ISSY-LES-MOULINEAUX | 211 | 267 | 0   | 285 | 0   |
| 16 | industrial | Sainte-Anne                     | LA MOTTE-SERVOLEX   | 62  | 344 | 0   | 46  | 7   |
| 17 | industrial | Saint-Joseph La Providence      | LAXOU               | 232 | 103 | 132 | 0   | 1   |
| 18 | industrial | Aux Lazaristes                  | LYON                | 727 | 0   | 467 | 0   | 0   |
| 19 | industrial | Jean-Baptiste de La Salle       | LYON                | 892 | 35  | 93  | 0   | 0   |
| 20 | industrial | Saint-Jean-Baptiste de La Salle | NANTES              | 426 | 512 | 185 | 80  | 1   |
| 21 | industrial | Avenir Jeunes Reims (AJR)       | REIMS               | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 1   |
| 22 | industrial | Ste-Geneviève - St-Joseph       | RODEZ               | 169 | 225 | 0   | 0   | 0   |
| 23 | industrial | Buzenval                        | RUEIL-MALMAISON     | 789 | 152 | 23  | 0   | 0   |
| 24 | industrial | Sainte-Barbe                    | SAINT-ÉTIENNE       | 216 | 245 | 98  | 0   | 0   |
| 25 | industrial | Jeunes Sourds Plein Vent        | SAINT-ÉTIENNE       | 2   | 18  | 0   | 0   | 0   |
| 26 | industrial | Saint-François Saint-Joseph     | THONON-LES-BAINS    | 527 | 0   | 52  | 0   | 0   |
| 27 | industrial | Saint-Joseph                    | TOULOUSE            | 630 | 272 | 192 | 0   | 0   |

|    |                          |                                 |                  |      |     |     |     |    |
|----|--------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------|------|-----|-----|-----|----|
| 28 | industrial               | Saint-Joseph                    | VANNES           | 193  | 665 | 188 | 0   | 1  |
| 29 | industrial -<br>tertiary | Saint-Genès                     | BORDEAUX         | 621  | 342 | 0   | 0   | 0  |
| 30 | industrial -<br>tertiary | Saint-Jean-Baptiste de La Salle | BOURGES          | 58   | 308 | 26  | 0   | 1  |
| 31 | industrial -<br>tertiary | La Croix Rouge                  | BREST            | 1295 | 757 | 294 | 0   | 0  |
| 32 | industrial -<br>tertiary | Godefroy-de-Bouillon            | CLERMONT-FERRAND | 774  | 574 | 384 | 0   | 1  |
| 33 | industrial -<br>tertiary | Pasteur Mont-Roland             | DOLE             | 375  | 386 | 153 | 200 | 30 |
| 34 | industrial -<br>tertiary | Deforest-de-Lewarde             | DOUAI            | 288  | 574 | 120 | 0   | 1  |
| 35 | industrial -<br>tertiary | Oeuvre de Guénange Richemont    | GUÉNANGE         | 0    | 59  | 0   | 0   | 0  |
| 36 | industrial -<br>tertiary | Saint-Gatien                    | JOUÉ-LES-TOURS   | 292  | 153 | 63  | 0   | 1  |

|    |                          |  |                              |      |     |     |     |     |
|----|--------------------------|--|------------------------------|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 37 | industrial -<br>tertiary | Saint-Joseph                               | LORIENT                      | 477  | 689 | 144 | 0   | 0   |
| 38 | industrial -<br>tertiary | Sacré-Coeur                                | PARAY-LE-MONIAL              | 152  | 431 | 0   | 9   | 13  |
| 39 | industrial -<br>tertiary | Sainte Elisabeth - Kersa                   | PLOUBAZLANEC                 | 0    | 323 | 32  | 0   | 0   |
| 40 | industrial -<br>tertiary | Saint-Joseph Lorraine                      | PRUILLE-LE-CHÉTIF            | 149  | 349 | 27  | 0   | 0   |
| 41 | industrial -<br>tertiary | Le Likès                                   | QUIMPER                      | 1355 | 547 | 308 | 0   | 0   |
| 42 | industrial -<br>tertiary | Saint-Jean-Baptiste de La Salle            | REIMS                        | 209  | 371 | 90  | 0   | 1   |
| 43 | industrial -<br>tertiary | ISAIP-ESAIP                                | SAINTE-BARTHELEMY<br>d'ANJOU | 0    | 0   | 483 | 0   | 106 |
| 44 | industrial -<br>tertiary | Sacré-Coeur                                | SAINTE-BRIEUC                | 564  | 691 | 209 | 0   | 1   |
| 45 | industrial -<br>tertiary | 'J-B.de La Salle -<br>N-D de la Compassion | SAINTE-DENIS                 | 638  | 241 | 54  | 140 | 0   |

|    |                          |                            |                         |     |     |     |   |    |
|----|--------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|-----|-----|-----|---|----|
| 46 | industrial -<br>tertiary | Saint-Charles (Lycée)      | SAINT-PIERRE La Réunion | 709 | 112 | 103 | 0 | 0  |
| 47 | industrial -<br>tertiary | Saint Julien La Baronnerie | SAINT-SYLVAIN-d'ANJOU   | 358 | 393 | 208 | 1 | 1  |
| 48 | industrial -<br>tertiary | Saint-Joseph               | TROYES                  | 170 | 687 | 109 | 0 | 1  |
| 49 | tertiary                 | Saint-Joseph               | AUXERRE                 | 361 | 148 | 50  | 0 | 0  |
| 50 | tertiary                 | de La Salle                | METZ                    | 262 | 79  | 298 | 0 | 20 |
| 51 | tertiary                 | Saint-Joseph du Loquidy    | NANTES                  | 630 | 0   | 123 | 0 | 0  |
| 52 | tertiary                 | Francs-Bourgeois           | PARIS                   | 634 | 0   | 0   | 0 | 0  |
| 53 | tertiary                 | Jeanne d'Arc               | REIMS                   | 0   | 111 | 0   | 0 | 0  |
| 54 | tertiary                 | Le Saint-Rosaire           | SARCELLES               | 530 | 0   | 0   | 0 | 0  |
| 55 | tertiary                 | Sainte-Anne                | VERDUN                  | 283 | 144 | 148 | 0 | 0  |
| 56 | médico-<br>social        | Jean-Baptiste de La Salle  | ROUEN                   | 583 | 0   | 162 | 0 | 0  |

| <b>TOTALS</b>               | <b>legt</b>   | <b>lpro</b>   | <b>superior</b> |
|-----------------------------|---------------|---------------|-----------------|
| – Agricultural              | 817           | 1 079         | 1 654           |
| – Industrial                | 6 381         | 4 578         | 1 654           |
| – Industrial -Tertiary      | 8 484         | 7 987         | 2 807           |
| – Tertiary - Medical-social | 3 283         | 482           | 781             |
|                             | <b>18 965</b> | <b>14 126</b> | <b>6 896</b>    |

**Notes:**

**legt:** high school for general and technological education.

**lpro:** professional high school.

**sup:** superior education - for those preparing the Diploma for Superior Technician.

**cfa:** formation center for apprentices - the number 1 indicates the existence of one such center.

**cfc:** center for continuing formation - same comment as above.

**Comments:**

- The above table was established for the Secretariat for the La Salle Association, but some modifications were made of the presentation made from it.
- We note the importance of the Professional High Schools within total of establishments and the large number of them where they are present.
- In the rubric: legt, no distinction has been made between those students who follow technological training the general studies students. The significant numbers are due to the presence of these different kinds of educational offers. Those with lower numbers generally reflect the fact that they only technological studies are offered.

## Conclusion

What has just been described makes sense only in terms of the motivation sustaining the persons who focused on and carried out such plans. This has already been apparent but it must be given more emphasis.

As far as the Brothers are concerned, one Brother who was in Technical Training as teacher or Principal, gave a response to an investigation intended to gather together the *Lasallian educational memory*, and it appears particularly significant. Answering a question on 'Aspects of the Brother's vocation', he wrote:

'My complete dedication to the service of young people in developing the feeling of a welcoming school is certainly the fundamental aspect of my vocation. It was in my blood as it is in that of other Brothers. I have lived as teacher and Principal to help pupils and teachers to be happy at school'.

As that is expressed very precisely, many other Brothers who have experienced the same things would be able to subscribe to what is said here. What has motivated them is a love for young people that can be called "passionate", whoever the young might be.

Regarding a question about Christian pedagogy, the point of view of this same Brother is just as characteristic of what Brothers of the same era commonly thought. This is how he expressed himself:

'I did not ask myself, any more, I think, than others did, if my teaching was Christian. The question was not asked. We put ourselves totally into the work, day and night, without counting the cost, doing our best to bring to the young the maximum amount of intellectual, spiritual and physical training, to ensure success and preparation for their future, and I think that is the essential thing'.

This manner of expression is, indeed, a very good demonstration, that Brothers like him thought it unnecessary to justify 'how'; what motivated them found its source in their Christian faith and their religious commitment. It was enough for them, they thought, to manifest it through what they were doing and the manner in which they did it. Nevertheless, it was really this faith and com-

mitment which profoundly inspired the way they were and the way they acted with the young.

Often limited to simply a few among lay fellow-workers whose number kept on increasing, these committed Brothers, in particular in Technical Training, knew how to share their motivation, if not with all, at least with a not inconsiderable number of those around them. As can be expected from what has just been said about these Brothers, it was hardly by means of exhortations, but through a kind of osmosis which won over even persons far from the Christian faith or strangers to it. The influence exerted by the Brothers, as a whole, became obvious when Laymen took charge of Lasallian establishments. It was striking, for example, to see the connection of the language of these latter with the Brothers, when they recall the way they have continued the work of the last named. It is seen, for example, in this passage from the book written by Mr François Velut about Saint Joseph's in Troyes:

'We think we can say that the preoccupations of John Baptist de La Salle about the education of the less privileged are still the real foundations of the school today'...

'Certainly, Saint Jo's has initiated more advanced training and that is fortunate because numbers of boys and girls, after facing a setback - and not facing up to themselves in a positive manner - after the 5<sup>th</sup> or the 3<sup>rd</sup>, have again found a taste for life thanks to some more concrete teaching. Many have taken up study again after a BEP. They have been able to fulfil their potential up to the Bac, the BTS or the DUT, not to say engineering training when in fact College had irremediably condemned them ... Regarding the ones who have fitted into an active life after their CAP, BEP or Bac. Pro., the essential thing is not that they have regained a taste for life and study, but that they are happy in their family and professional lives' (p.188).

Whether you are thinking about Brothers or Lay People you find the same faith in what they look upon as a mission on behalf of young people. Without a doubt, not all these are in difficult circumstances, but the number of those who find themselves in such situations in a more or less long-standing way justifies their devoting themselves to such young people unreservedly. And if that is the case with many others in Lasallian establishments, in Catholic Education or Public Education, it is true that such persons are met

in sufficient numbers in these establishments, and especially in the professional training establishments within the Lasallian network, for this fact to deserve emphasis.

For sure, the results obtained would have to be checked to see if they fulfilled the intentions expressed. But, definitely, it seems possible to say that what Brothers undertook and brought to success by their devotion and tenacity, has led, thanks to the Laymen who have taken over from them, to results for a long time considered impossible, but in line with the same intentions.

## Final Questions

### **For reflection and sharing:**

1. What is your general reaction when you read the first part of the bulletin - up to the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War - as regards the type of work undertaken by the Brothers? What elements stand out most?
2. How do you value the contribution of the Institute of the Brothers to French technical education during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century?
3. Great obstacles in recent decades have been the progressive decrease in the number of Brothers in educational works throughout the country. What do you think of the solution and the effort involved in creating the sponsorship and the "Network of Lasallian Centers?" What are their challenges and strengths?



# Documentation

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- Monsieur Pierre Lecat, Director General, and those in charge of technical training, of Saint Joseph's School in Dijon.
- Monsieur Jean Ponge, Head of Works at Saint Joseph's Technological and Professional High School in Nevers (This Ministry it is no longer in the Lasallian Network).

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