CATHOLICS AND SCHOOLS IN VICHY FRANCE,
1940-44

Nicholas James Atkin
Royal Holloway and Bedford New College

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ABSTRACT

In 1940 the French Catholic Church was quick to blame military defeat on the laicism of the Third Republic. However, the Church was confident that it could rectify the errors of the past. The new authoritarian regime at Vichy offered the possibility of overturning the past sixty years of secularism and of rebuilding France along Christian lines.

This thesis examines how the Church attempted to win France back to the faith through the vehicle of education. It shows how it hoped to strengthen the position of its own educational system and how it tried to re-assert its influence over children in the State school. The study is divided into four parts. The first looks at the role education played in Church/State relations and puts into context events treated in more detail later. The second part examines the curriculum of confessional schools and the ways by which the Church attempted to influence the lessons of the State school. Part three looks at teachers and pays particular attention to the teaching orders. Although they recovered much of their former legal status under Vichy, they never became fully-fledged supporters of the regime. In addition, the thesis looks at how the Church tried to break the traditional secularism of the State 'instituteurs'. Part four investigates the funding of Catholic education. It examines the measures that Vichy took to alleviate the material plight of Catholic schools and illustrates how State subsidies contributed to the growth of Catholic education.

Analysis of Vichy's educational policy reveals that the regime was less clerical than has previously been recognised. This study also
concludes that the Church was not an unqualified supporter of the regime and that Catholics began to have their doubts about Vichy far earlier than has sometimes been suggested.
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To Claire

In recent years a considerable amount of historical research has been devoted to the educational and youth policies of the Vichy regime. This was shown how Vichy attempted to revitalise youth in support of the National Revolution, only for the whole experiment to end in failure as the war progressed. It is now quite clear that Vichy's reforms of the educational system and its support for youth organisations were not only an attempt to overthrow the allegedly republican, anticlerical and secular system that had been responsible for the defeat in 1940, but also a deliberate attempt to foster political integration in the new state.

Ultimately, Vichy's policies led to the systematic exclusion of the Jews and of young people in the face of German demands for manpower in 1943. By 1943 the idea of 1940 had been replaced by the hard realities of the occupation. In the remaining months of the regime, Vichy precipitated little in the way of constructive reform.


3 Ibid.

4 Rollin, The Youth of Vichy France, p. 62
In recent years a considerable amount of historical research has been devoted to the educational and youth policies of the Vichy regime. This has shown how Vichy attempted to mobilize the young in support of the National Revolution, only for the whole experiment to end in failure. As has been remarked, 'It is now quite clear that Vichy's reforms of the educational system and its support for youth organisations were not only an attempt to overturn an allegedly republican, bookish and secular system that was held responsible for the defeat in 1940, but also a deliberate attempt to foster political integration in the new state.' Ultimately, Vichy's policies led to the 'cynical sacrifice of the interests of young people in the face of German demands for compulsory labour in 1943-4.' By 1943 the idealism of 1940 had been swept away by the harsh realities of the Occupation. In the remaining months of the regime, Vichy accomplished little in the way of constructive reform.


3. ibid

4. Halls The Youth of Vichy France p.61
We know far less, however, about how the French Catholic Church viewed the question of education under Vichy. It too had a strong interest in the young. If France was to remain a Christian country, then it was imperative that children were brought up in line with the teachings of Christianity. Accordingly, the Church was quick to rally round the pro-clerical government of Marshal Pétain. At long last, there appeared to be an opportunity of overturning the institutionalised secularism of the State educational system. Yet how did the Church set about this task, and how did its own schools respond to the Occupation?

To a large extent, it is because of the sensitivity of these questions that they remain unanswered. The role of the Church during the Occupation continues to generate considerable controversy. In the years immediately following the Liberation most histories of the Church were highly polarised. On the one hand, Catholic writers sought to apologise for the ambivalent attitude that the Church had adopted towards Pétain. On the other, anticlericals accused it of collaborating with the regime.² A more measured account came in 1966


2. See J. Cottereau 'L'Eglise a-t-elle Collaboré?', in Problèmes Actuels mai 1946, no.65, as well as his L'Eglise et Pétain (Paris, Editions de l'Idée Libre, 1947)
with the publication of Jacques Duquesne's *Les Catholiques Français Sous l'Occupation.* This illustrated that the Church was not a monolithic bloc, but that it comprised several elements each of which responded differently to the circumstances of the war. Work conducted since then has reinforced this interpretation. Nonetheless, few of these studies have examined in detail the position that the Church adopted à propos education.

The present study aims to depict how the Church used the occasion of the defeat to reassert its influence over the young. Firstly, it looks at how the Church set out to strengthen the position of its own schools. Secondly, it examines how the Church tried to penetrate the State educational system. In so doing, this study illustrates that the Vichy regime was not as pro-clerical as has sometimes been alleged. Like Republican governments of the inter-war years, Vichy was reluctant to introduce any measure that might provoke religious division. At the same time, this study reinforces the view that French Catholicism was not a monolithic bloc. The debates over education only served to intensify the divisions already present within the Church. Analysis of these arguments also shows that Catholics began to have their suspicions about Vichy far earlier than has sometimes been recognised. In several

histories, the Church is portrayed as an ardent supporter of the regime until Laval's return to power in April 1942. However, as early as February 1941, disappointment at the government's educational policies led several Catholics to turn away from the regime. Even so, it can not be denied that the majority of the Church hierarchy retained a faith in Pétain until the Liberation.

Considerable problems exist for any study of French Catholicism during the Occupation. The official Church archives for the period are closed to researchers. To complicate matters further, several official Catholic publications, including *La Documentation Catholique,* did not appear for 1940-1944. The disruption created by the war also meant that many Catholic educational journals, such as *L'Enseignement Chrétien,* ceased publication. In the absence of these sources, this study has made extensive use of the *Semaines Religieuses.* These were the diocesan bulletins published under the supervision of the local bishop. Although primarily concerned with administrative and pastoral matters, these

1. During the absence of *La Documentation Catholique,* the Church published a number of compilations of official documents. Among the most useful of these are: *La Vie Catholique, Documents et Actes de la Hiérarchie Catholique, Années 1940-1941* (Paris, La Bonne Presse, 1942) and *La Vie Sociale de l'Eglise, Documents et Actes Officiels, Années 1940-1942* (Paris, la Bonne Presse, 1942) (Hereafter *La Vie Catholique* and *La Vie Sociale*)

2. For a bibliographical guide to the *Semaines Religieuses* see E. Poulat *Les "Semaines Religieuses". Approche Socio-Historique et Bibliographique des Bulletins Diocésains Français* (Lyon, Presses Universitaires de Lyon, 1972)
provide an invaluable guide to the political and moral preoccupations of
the Church in a particular area.' At the same time, the Semaines
Religieuses are a helpful source for the Church and education. As well
as publishing information about the condition of Catholic schools, they
provide a commentary on Vichy's educational reforms. Additional
commentary on these reforms may be found in the Catholic press. This
study looked at a number of Catholic newspapers, most notably La Croix,
which by 1940 was considered by many to be the official newspaper of
the Church.

To compensate further for the lack of archival material on the part
of the Church, this thesis made considerable use of the holdings of the
Archives Nationales at Paris. Permission was granted to consult the
papers of Pétain's cabinet and of the Ministry of Education. In
addition, selective use was made of the documents of the German Military
Command in France, the Militärbefehlshaber in Frankreich (MBF) and of
the Agence Française d'Information de Presse (AFIP). Also of interest

1. Cf. C. Langois 'Le Régime de Vichy et le Clergé d'après Les Semaines
Religieuses des diocèses de la zone libre, 1940-42', in
Revue Française de Science Politique Vol XXII, no.4,
août 1972, pp.750-773. The present study has also concentrated on
the Semaines Religieuses for the unoccupied zone. These appeared
with greater regularity than those for the North of France and did
not suffer as much from censorship.

2. Because of Vichy censorship, it is helpful to read La Croix in
conjunction with the memoirs of its political leader-writer, Pierre
Limagne. See P. Limagne Ephémérides de Quatre Années Tragiques
were the reports of the Commission Philip established in 1945 to investigate the relationship between public and private schools. Together, these documents provide an indispensable guide to the religious and educational policies of the regime. Nonetheless, they have a drawback in that they are primarily concerned with the State educational system and not with its Catholic counterpart.

Similar problems exist for the memoirs of the period. The majority of these were written by ex-Vichy ministers and officials. As such, they deal principally with changes in State schools. Only a few accounts have much to say about Catholic education and the ways by which the Church attempted to influence the policies of the regime. Among the most notable of these, we may include Jérôme Carcopino's *Souvenirs de Sept Ans,* and Henri Dodier's *A la Recherche de la Paix Scolaire.* Unfortunately for the historian, few leading clerics have chosen to make public their recollections of the Occupation; even then, these tend to be little more than apologias for the Church.

Although several people have been kind enough to share with me their experiences of the Occupation, this study has not made much use of

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1. *J. Carcopino* *Souvenirs de Sept Ans 1937-1944* (Paris, Flammarion, 1953) (Hereafter Carcopino *Souvenirs de Sept Ans*)

interviews. In any case, most of the leading figures who shaped the educational policies of both Vichy and the Church are now dead.'

Because of the incomplete nature of the primary material available, this study has not been able to cover all aspects of the Church and education under Vichy. Although there was sufficient information to look at teaching orders, it was not possible to examine in detail lay Catholic teachers. Nor does this work investigate Catholic institutes of higher education. They merit a separate study of their own, as do the youth organisations of Action Catholique.

Several people have assisted me with my research and it is not possible to thank them all individually. I must, however, thank my supervisor, Dr Pamela Pilbeam of Royal Holloway and Bedford New College, London. She has been a constant source of good advice. I should also like to thank Dr John Mackrell of Westfield College, London, who first interested me in French history. My thanks also extend to Dr Roger Austin of the New University of Ulster at Coleraine; to Professor Michael Biddiss of the University of Reading; to Miss Jacqueline Guyatt of Birkbeck College, London; to Dr Bill Halls of the University of Oxford; to Mr Rod Kedward of the University of Sussex; and to Professor Douglas Johnson of

1. This study has preserved the anonymity of those individuals who played no official part in the Occupation.
University College, London. They have all improved this thesis; its mistakes are my own.

In France my thanks go to Mme Bonazzi, director of the Section Contemporaine of the Archives Nationales at Paris. I should also like to thank the librarians and staff of the following institutions: the Archives Nationales, Paris; the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris; the British Library, London; the Institut Catholique, Paris; and the Institut d'Histoire du Temps Présent, Paris.

In the course of my research I have given papers to a number of seminars. I am especially grateful to members of the French seminar at the Institute of Historical Research, London, for their helpful comments and advice. I have also received valuable criticisms from research seminars at the Universities of Oxford and Reading.

This thesis could not have been written without financial assistance from several quarters. I should like to acknowledge generous awards from the following bodies: the Central Research Fund, London University; the Gainsborough Educational Charity; the French Government; and Westfield College, London. I must also thank my parents for their unfailing generosity.

Finally, my thanks go to Miss Claire Procter. Not only has she typed the manuscript, she has provided me with constant encouragement and support.
# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations are used in the text or in the footnotes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACA</td>
<td>Assemblée des Cardinaux et Archevêques</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACJF</td>
<td>Association Catholique de la Jeunesse Française</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AN</td>
<td>Archives Nationales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APEL</td>
<td>Association des Parents d'Enfants de l'Enseignement Libre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BR</td>
<td>Bulletin Religieux</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEP</td>
<td>Certificat d'Études Primaires</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEPP</td>
<td>Diplôme d'Études Primaires Préparatoires</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DRAC</td>
<td>Ligue des Droits des Religieux Anciens Combattants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FGSPF</td>
<td>Fédération Gymnastique et Sportive des Patronages de France</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FNC</td>
<td>Fédération Nationale Catholique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IU</td>
<td>Information Universitaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JEC</td>
<td>Jeunesse Étudiante Chrétienne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JECF</td>
<td>Jeunesse Étudiante Chrétienne Féminine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JO</td>
<td>Journal Officiel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LVF</td>
<td>Légion des Volontaires Français contre le Bolchévisme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPF</td>
<td>Parti Populaire Français</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QR</td>
<td>Quinzaine Religieuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDM</td>
<td>Revue des Deux Mondes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RHDGM</td>
<td>Revue d'Histoire de la Deuxième Guerre Mondiale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RNP</td>
<td>Rassemblement National Populaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RPS</td>
<td>Répartition Proportionnelle Scolaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RR</td>
<td>Revue Religieuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWI</td>
<td>Syndicat National des Instituteurs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SR</td>
<td>Semaine Religieuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STO</td>
<td>Service du Travail Obligatoire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UGSEL</td>
<td>Union Générale Sportive de l'Enseignement Libre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UGSFP</td>
<td>Union Gymnastique et Sportive des Patronages de France</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VC</td>
<td>Vie Catholique</td>
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The conflict over education has been a perennial theme in the history of modern France. Ever since the late eighteenth century, Catholics and Republicans have struggled to influence the minds of the young. Both sides clearly recognised the importance of education as a means by which to promote their own values. The Church considered that it was empowered to watch over the eternal salvation of the faithful. As such, it was vital that Catholicism should play an integral part in the education of the young. Only then would France remain a Christian country. Yet Republicans believed with equal fervour that in a nation divided in its political and religious beliefs, the role of the Church should be kept to an absolute minimum. Otherwise, there was a danger that Catholic and Republican schools, operating independently and in competition with each other, would produce, in the memorable phrase of Waldeck-Rousseau, 'deux jeunesse', which would divide France into two hostile camps threatening civil war. To prevent this Republicans longed for a secular and universal State educational system which would liberate man from the shackles of religion.

The first major challenge to Catholic influence within education was, of course, the Revolution of 1789. Until then education had been a public service entrusted to the care of the Church. As a result, the Church enjoyed a virtual monopoly over schooling in France. This arrangement suited both Church and State. The ancien régime monarchy was reluctant to shoulder the financial burden of the provision of public
education. Moreover, it valued the religious instruction provided by the Church as a means by which to bolster the existing political and social order. At the same time, the Church argued that this monopoly was necessary to bring the people to piety and to promote Christian discipline. Yet the revolutionaries were less satisfied. They believed that it was the duty of the State to organise, administer and finance an educational system which would inculcate a loyalty to the values of 'liberté, égalité, fraternité'. In the event, the revolutionaries discovered that the Church was too firmly entrenched in the structure of French education to be completely uprooted. Even so, they had succeeded in drawing up the philosophical arguments which would dominate educational debate thereafter.

The First Empire marked a partial return to the cooperation between Church and State that had existed prior to the Revolution. In 1808 Napoleon officially nationalised French education with the creation of the University. Nonetheless, he was prepared to restore to the Church some of its former freedoms. In his view education was to be valued most for what it could provide for the State. Accordingly, the University took charge of secondary schools and institutes of higher education. It

was their job to provide a specialised professional training for the sons of notables who wanted to pursue a career in State service. Yet Napoleon had reservations about extending a similar system of education to the lower orders. Such a move was considered economically wasteful and socially dangerous. He was, therefore, content to leave the provision of public elementary schooling in the capable hands of the Church. The religious instruction the Church dispensed, considered Napoleon, was the surest way of legitimizing the status quo and of preserving social stability. For the moment, at least, few Catholics were ready to challenge this settlement. Rather the majority welcomed their hold on public elementary schooling as it meant that the Church could continue to teach the tenets of Catholicism, albeit under the watchful eye of the University.

Between 1815 and 1880 few governments were prepared to overhaul radically the imperial system of national education. They welcomed the cooperation with the Church and valued the University as a means by which to regulate clerical influence. Yet Catholics were less happy. They became worried about the extent of State controls. For example, in 1828 the Jesuit order was prohibited from teaching. Consequently, the Church was convinced of the need to defend and enlarge its freedoms within education. With dogged persistence, the Church began to break free from the shackles of governmental control. This was accomplished in

three stages. The first stage was initiated by the Loi Guizot of 28 June 1833. According to this, every commune in France was to maintain an elementary school. The school itself could be either public or private. Likewise, the teacher could be either a layman or a member of a religious order. The result was that the Church set up its own schools thus extending its grip on elementary education. During the 1870s nearly one fifth of French children were educated in Catholic primary schools.¹ In the same period, clerics taught a third of all pupils in public elementary schools. The second stage was the Loi Falloux of 15 March 1850. This allowed members of religious orders, without requiring any further qualifications from the State, to open their own schools. As such, the law moderated something of the rigid controls of the University and gave a further boost to Catholic secondary education. By 1876 Catholic secondary schools taught 31 per cent of the total secondary school population.² The third stage was the law of 12 July 1875 which extended similar freedoms to the Church in higher education.


In future, Catholics could set up their own universities and, under the supervision of a mixed jury of professors, award their own qualifications. Thus by the 1870s the Church had made considerable headway at all three levels of education. It had challenged the control of the University and had established a system of dual schooling in France.

Yet these hard-won freedoms were soon under threat. When in 1879 the Republicans finally took control of the government, the conflict between Church and State entered a new and bitter phase. The Republicans were determined to curtail the influence of the Church over the young. Imbued with a faith in science and reason, many Republicans viewed their task as educating future generations who would think rationally and who would contribute to the moral and material well-being of France.' The Church, with its irrationalist and obsolete doctrines, had no part to play in this process. Furthermore, there were political reasons behind Republican hostility towards the Church. In the early years of the Third Republic the Church had openly sided with the monarchists in the Chamber of Deputies. It was feared, therefore, that those children brought up in Catholic schools would later become reactionaries, hostile to democratic and Republican ideals.

To weaken the grip of the Church, the Republicans set out to

1. M.Larkin Church and State after the Dreyfus Affair. The Separation Issue in France (London, MacMillan, 1974) p.23 (Hereafter Larkin Church and State)
secularize the French educational system. Between 1879 and 1906 they laid down the foundations of 'laïcité'. A law of 18 March 1880 prohibited Catholic institutes of higher education from calling themselves universities. At the same time, the mixed juries were abolished. But the Republicans' real concern was elementary education as it was here that clerical influence was strongest. A law of 16 June 1881 abolished fees for State primary schools. Another law of 28 March 1882 made primary education obligatory for all children aged between seven and thirteen. This same law established the principle of 'neutralité'. Henceforth religious instruction administered through the catechism was excluded from the State school. In its place, the Republicans instituted a programme of moral and civic instruction based on moral ideas common to all denominations. In turn, this laïcisation was extended to the teaching profession. On 30 October 1886 members of religious orders were prohibited from teaching in public schools. They were replaced by the State-trained 'instituteurs', the 'black hussars' of the Republic. Later on, the religious orders suffered two further setbacks. A law of 1 July 1901 prevented members of non-authorised orders from teaching, whereas legislation of 7 July 1904 banned congregational teaching altogether. Ultimately, the gulf that divided Catholics and Republicans led to the Law of Separation of 9 December 1905. This replaced the Napoleonic Concordat of 1801. While it guaranteed the freedom of worship, in future the State undertook not to recognise or subsidize any religion.

The Church bitterly resented the above dispositions. The exclusion of all clerical influence from the public school meant that the Church
could no longer bring up a sizeable proportion of the French population in accordance with the tenets of Catholicism. Small wonder, therefore, that Catholics were quick to blame the spread of déchristianisation on the secular laws of education. If France was a 'pays de mission' by the 1930s, then it was largely the fault of 'laïcité'. Nor is it any surprise that the secular laws hardened clerical opposition to the Republic. When in the 1890s Pope Leo XIII attempted to promote a 'ralliement' between Church and State in France, he found little support among the faithful. Yet in other regards the secular laws were not as damaging as has sometimes been alleged. 'Laïcité' did not mean the end of Catholic education. Several members of religious orders continued to teach in defiance of the authorities. They simply abandoned their religious robes and adopted civilian dress. Furthermore, Catholic elementary schools continued to educate around a fifth of the total primary school population. In 1939, 4,009,873 children attended the public school, whereas 903,211 went to its Catholic counterpart. The figures for Catholic secondary education were even more impressive. Despite the abolition of fees in public secondary schools (1930-32), the Church continued to hold its own. By 1939 the Church educated 163,996 students in comparison to 263,000 in the

1. Archives Nationales (Hereafter AN) F17 13365, Report of 10 June 1942
After the First World War the Church had hoped for a general relaxation of the secular laws and for their eventual removal from the statute books. Certainly the moment seemed propitious. The 'Union Sacrée' of 1914 had helped promote a spirit of reconciliation, whereas the election in 1919 of the right-wing Bloc National promised to bring an end to the hardened laicism of the past. Likewise the Church itself appeared more favourably disposed towards the Republic. In 1926, in the desire for a new 'ralliement', Pius XI condemned the extremist movement, the Action Française. Yet the Church failed to make much headway in education. Although after 1918 several Republicans had moved towards the Right, they remained committed to the ideals of 'laïcité' and were extremely reluctant to tamper with the secular laws. Nor did the Church believe that the anticlerical threat had passed. In 1919 it was alarmed at the proposal of a group of former schoolteachers, known as the Compagnons de l'Université Nouvelle, to merge public elementary and secondary schools to create an 'école unique'. The Compagnons hoped that such a system would break down class divisions, yet Catholics feared

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1. AN F17 13365, Report of 10 June 1942
that their own schools would be unable to compete with the superior resources of the 'école unique' should it be established.' Even more worrying was the election in 1924 of the left-wing Cartel des Gauches which wanted to extend the secular laws to Alsace-Lorraine. Similarly in 1936 Catholics were frightened that the Popular Front would re-enforce this legislation. However, this threat quickly passed. The Daladier government of 1938 was eager to appease the Church and envisaged many of the educational reforms which Vichy was later to introduce. Nonetheless, the Church was never to reconcile itself fully to the Republic. While Church/State relations in the inter-war period were not as embittered as in the past, the question of education continued to provoke division and controversy.

Given this background, the Church was quick to rally round the new authoritarian regime of Marshal Pétain at Vichy. This reaction may be illustrated by an incident related by Paul Crouzet, the mayor of a small village in the Hérault.® On 23 June 1940, the day Pétain announced the Armistice, Crouzet recollects that he went to mass at his local church. There he discovered not the usual priest, who had been mobilized, but a replacement from outside of the area. Conscious that a representative of


the Republic was in the congregation, the new priest exercised great tact and discretion during the service, yet at the very end let slip the words: 'France laïque, tu peux périr; France chrétienne, tu survis.' Such incidents must have been common all over France in the summer of 1940. Even so, this pithy phrase embodied many of the sentiments and aspirations of the Church at the time of the defeat. Although the Republic had yet to be formally abolished, few Catholics were sad to see its demise. To many, military disaster was a moment of revenge on the past sixty years of institutionalised secularism. But in defeat there was also great hope. Under the leadership of Pétain, the Church looked forward to a new future in which France would rediscover her Christian roots.

This hope was greatest in education. As we have seen, the Third Republic offered the Church little prospect of change. The secular laws had become seemingly immutable. Yet Vichy offered new promise and new possibilities. Firstly, the Church looked to strengthen the position of its own educational system. Rhetorically, at least, Church leaders spoke of recapturing France for the faith through the vehicle of the Catholic school. Secondly, and more importantly, the Church sought to recover its influence over the young in the public school. At long last, there appeared to be a chance of curbing some of the worst excesses of Republican 'laïcité'. Over the next four years the Church would pursue these two aims with an impressive tenacity of purpose. To begin with, it enjoyed some success, but ultimately it would discover that Vichy could be just as obdurate as the old Republic.
Part One

THE CONTEXT
In the midst of the disarray and confusion of 1940 few members of the French Catholic Church turned round and viewed defeat in the rational and objective terms of defective military strategy and logistics. Instead, in the extraordinary mood of introspection that gripped the country, the answer was much more likely to be found in the 'esprit de jouissance' or 'vague de matérialisme' that were felt to have submerged France, leaving her vanquished beneath the tracks of Guderian's tanks.

No overall consensus existed as to the exact cause of this decadence, but few doubted its roots lay with the official 'laïcité' of the Third Republic. In a pastoral letter of September 1940 Mgr Villerabel, archbishop of Aix, likened this to a cancer which had disfigured France and led her to ruin. Mgr Caillot, bishop of Grenoble, declared that defeat was due to 'l'oubli de Dieu', and added, 'Et ce n'est pas assez dire oubli de Dieu, abandon de la religion de la part des masses... mais de la part de ceux qui gouvernaient.' This was the same complaint of Mgr Couderc, bishop of Viviers. Among the many mistakes of the old Republic, he remarked, 'La plus énorme - parce

1. La Semaine Religieuse de l'Archdiocèse d'Aix 15 septembre 1940, no.37, p.37 (Hereafter SR d'Aix)

qu'elle fut la source de beaucoup d'autres - fut sans aucun doute, de la part de l'État, l'ignorance officielle de la religion, qui dégénéra le plus souvent en luttes stupides et en persécutions odieuses contre les catholiques."

Such ignorance, he concluded, had destroyed the traditional French values of God, work, country and obedience, ideals that would have saved France on the battlefield. Defeat was divine retribution for their abandonment.

Several aspects of 'laïcité' came under fire in 1940. Mgr Rastouil, bishop of Limoges, condemned Republican policies on divorce, which he alleged, had destroyed the stability and fecundity of the French family. Other members of the Church hierarchy, such as Mgr Saliège, archbishop of Toulouse, denounced the atheism of Republican politicians themselves. Yet most scorn was poured on the secular laws on education of the 1880s and early 1900s. In 1940 Catholics recalled with bitterness the laicisation of the curriculum of the 'école publique' and the exclusion of religious orders from teaching. As La Revue Religieuse de Rodez of 6 September 1940 commented, 'Depuis 1880, une guerre religieuse impitoyable est déchaînée chez nous. Tantôt sournoisement, tantôt ouvertement et même violemment elle s'attaque à l'œuvre du Christ. Un programme inexorable de déchristianisation a été élaboré, puis introduit

1. SR de Viviers 28 février 1941, no.9, p.78
2. SR de Limoges 30 août, no.35, p.387
3. La Croix 13 juillet 1940
et exécuté." This, in turn, led some Catholics to ask how France could have hoped to have won the campaign in 1940 when God no longer played a part in the education of so many young people. This question was posed most forcefully by Mgr Durieux, archbishop of Chambéry. In July 1940, he asked:

Avant la guerre, qu'avait fait notre pays pour mériter la protection du ciel? Faut-il rappeler l'apostosie nationale dont se faisaient gloire nos gouvernants, la guerre faite, pendant soixante ans, à l'Eglise, aux congrégations religieuses, à l'école libre, c'est-à-dire à toutes les forces spirituelles, seules capables de garder l'âme de la France, en lui conservant la foi? Tout a été mis en œuvre pour chasser Dieu de nos tribunaux, de nos hôpitaux, de l'armée, de l'école, afin de laïciser le peuple français.

God would only return to assist France, he concluded, if this paganism was reversed.

In the face of Republican persecution, the Church had nothing but praise for the achievements and resilience of its own educational system. In difficult circumstances Catholic schools had done their utmost to ensure that the young received a Christian upbringing. They could not, therefore, be held responsible for the defeat. In September 1940 Canon Aimond, the editor of the Catholic review L'Enseignement Chrétien, proudly declared that in spite of the mutilations inflicted on

1. La Revue Religieuse de Rodez 6 septembre 1940, no.36, p.348 (Hereafter RR de Rodez)
'enseignement libre' by the laws of 1880, 1886, 1901 and 1904, Church schools had been of a great benefit to the national community. Aimond concluded, 'Enfin, disons-le sans vain orgueil, l'enseignement libre a bien mérité de la "patrie".' Similar claims were made later on in the Occupation by Mgr Bornet, the auxiliary bishop of Lyon. In a speech of February 1944 he repudiated past Republican allegations that Catholic education divided a nation already troubled in its political and religious beliefs. A good Catholic, maintained Bornet, was the most patriotic of citizens.²

In 1940 the contempt which the Church felt towards the 'laïcité' of the Republic was matched only by the hope placed in the new regime. The actual policies and religious complexion of the Vichy government will be discussed later, but there can be little doubting the enthusiasm with which it was greeted by Catholics. Pétain himself was seized upon as a saviour figure who would deliver France from the past sixty years of institutionalised secularism. Welcoming the Marshal to his cathedral on 11 November 1940, Mgr Piguet, the bishop of Clermont-Ferrand, declared, 'Nous demandons A Dieu, monsieur le Maréchal, de bénir votre personne vénérée et respectueusement aimée et de lui permettre de mener à bien son œuvre courageuse et magnifique de renouveau pour le bonheur de la France, dotée une fois de plus par la Providence, au milieu de ses

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1. La Croix 18 septembre 1940
2. SR de Montpellier 12 février 1944, no.7, pp.77-78
infortunes, de l'homme capable d'atténuer son malheur, de reconstruire sur ses ruines, de préparer l'avenir.' In turn, none of the hierarchy doubted the legitimacy of the new regime. Six days after the conclusion of the Armistice Cardinal Gerlier of Lyon remarked, 'Les décisions couvertes de l'autorité de Pétain, Weygand, sont, d'évidence, les seules possibles.' In any case, as has been pointed out, it was the usual custom of the Church to recognise a 'de facto' government. Consequently, Vichy was accredited with a Papal Nuncio, Valerio Valeri, and had its own ambassador, Léon Bérard, at the Vatican. Yet some members of the hierarchy went even further in their allegiance to the new regime. At least twelve bishops agreed with Mgr Chollet, archbishop of Cambrai, when he stated that Pétain was the 'autorité légitime'. For example, in July 1940 Mgr Bonnabel, the bishop of Gap, instructed his diocesans, that, 'Notre devoir est d'accepter le sort qui nous est fait,

1. Mgr Piguet quoted in Duquesne Les Catholiques Français p.45
4. ibid
en chrétiens et en Français, et pour la part personnelle qui nous revient dans ce malheur national de la porter avec dignité, avec courage, dans l'obéissance au gouvernement légitime qui préside aux destinées de la Patrie.' Only in 1941 did the hierarchy moderate its position and acknowledge Vichy as 'le pouvoir établi'.

In the meantime, however, the more immediate concern of the Church was to indicate to Vichy the kind of policies it would like to see pursued in regards to education. Because of the organisation of the French Church this task fell to the cardinals and archbishops, and not to the bishops themselves. Ever since the concordat of 1801 bishops had been prevented from meeting together to formulate policy. After the Separation of 1905 Pius X re-enforced this ban in an attempt to curb Gallicanism and to ensure the subservience of the French clergy to Rome. As a result, Cardinal Verdier of Paris remarked, 'La France a des évêques, mais elle n'a pas d'épiscopat.' Indeed, it was not until 1919 that the cardinals and archbishops were permitted to hold an assembly

1. La Quinzaine Religieuse de Gap juillet 1940, no.580, p.98 (Hereafter QR de Gap)

2. Please see below pp.59-60


twice a year to co-ordinate their strategy. Under Vichy even these meetings were threatened. The division of France into two ensured that the Assembly of Cardinals and Archbishops (ACA) was unable to meet as a whole. Instead, Church leaders were forced to hold separate bi-annual meetings in the occupied and non-occupied zones.

Altogether France had five cardinals in 1940. However, one of these, Cardinal Verdier of Paris, died shortly before the defeat. With his death the Church lost an experienced negotiator and one of its leading experts in educational affairs. Earlier in 1934 Verdier had published La Question Scolaire, a comprehensive study of the schools problem in France. In this, he celebrated the Christian purpose of education, "Nous disons que toute école, quand elle est destinée à former dans l'enfant l'homme et le citoyen de demain, est tenue en juste de lui enseigner l'existence de Dieu et sa Providence, la liberté, la spiritualité et l'immoralité de l'âme, les devoirs traditionnels envers Dieu, envers le prochain et envers nous-mêmes, le respect de la propriété privée et des autres bases essentielles de la civilisation." Accordingly, Verdier was deeply critical of the 'laïcité' of the State School. In 1939 he once more warned of its dangers. 'Les événements parlant au nom de Dieu', he

1. Deroo L'Episcopat Français p.12
2. Cardinal Verdier La Question Scolaire (Paris, Gabriel Beauchesne et ses fils, 1934) p.102 (Hereafter Verdier La Question Scolaire)
It was thus necessary, 'à remettre la morale à la base de l'éducation de l'enfant et à redonner aux forces spirituelles leur place normale.' To achieve this, in January 1940 Verdier submitted a memorandum to the Quai d'Orsay. This called upon the government to lift the teaching ban on religious orders, to reinstate the catechism within the 'programmes scolaires' of the 'école publique' and to grant subsidies to Catholic schools. Anxious to promote a spirit of reconciliation, the Daladier government gave a sympathetic hearing to these demands. Yet, as Verdier himself had predicted, the laicism of the Education Ministry was too strong for such radical proposals to be implemented. Nonetheless, Verdier's memorandum would serve as a basis for future Church demands under Vichy.

Verdier's replacement as archbishop of Paris was Cardinal Suhard, formerly archbishop of Reims. Having spent most of his life in Western France, Suhard had little practical experience and understanding of

2. J.P.Cointet 'L'Eglise Catholique et le Gouvernement de Vichy', in Actes: Lyon p.437
politics. Instead, his interests were primarily pastoral. He saw his role as preventing the further dechristianisation of France. Shortly before the war, he warned, 'Pas de restauration de la France sans la restauration de la morale chrétienne.' The key to this restoration, he believed, lay in the Christian education of the young provided by Catholic schools. Thus he too was a severe critic of 'laïcité' and was an early supporter of the new regime. In a speech of 27 June 1940 he welcomed the signing of the Armistice and hailed Pétain as the saviour of France. Yet Suhard remained wary of politics. Throughout the Occupation his major preoccupation was to safeguard the rights of the Church and those of its schools.

A more complicated figure was Cardinal Gerlier of Lyon, Primate of the Gauls. A lawyer by training, Gerlier had become president of the Association Catholique de la Jeunesse Française (ACJF) and had close

1. P.Pucheu Ma Vie (Paris, Amiot-Dumont, 1948) p.289 (Hereafter Pucheu Ma Vie)

2. For Suhard's pastoral concerns see Cardinal Suhard Carnets du Cardinal Suhard (Paris, La Bonne Presse, 1951) and The Church Today. The Collected Writings of Emmanuel Cardinal Suhard (Chicago, Fides Publishers, 1953) (Hereafter Suhard The Church Today)

3. Suhard quoted in Fidus 'S.Em.le Cardinal Suhard, Archevêque de Paris', in La Revue des Deux Mondes (Hereafter RDM), 1 juin, pp.531-536

4. SR de Paris 31 août 1940, no.4511, p.523
ties with Action Catholique. Yet this did not prevent Gerlier from rallying to the new government of Pétain. 'Victorieux', he remarked, 'nous serions probablement restés emprisonés dans nos erreurs. A force d'être laïcisée, la France risquait de mourir.' On 19 November 1940 Gerlier made his famous declaration, 'Pétain, c'est la France et la France aujourd'hui, c'est Pétain.' But in return for this devotion, Gerlier expected to see a resolution to the schools question. This he made clear in an earlier speech of July 1940:

Pour le relèvement du pays, aucun problème n'est plus essentiel que celui de la formation intellectuelle et morale de la jeunesse. Il faut résoudre enfin dans la clarté, dans la justice, la question scolaire. L'école publique doit respecter scrupuleusement l'âme de l'enfant. L'école libre doit être mise effectivement à la disposition des familles chrétiennes qui la désirent, par une attribution plus équitable des subsides scolaires.

Vichy's anti-Semitic legislation quickly dampened Gerlier's enthusiasm for the regime, yet he continued to press for concessions to Catholic schools.

4. ibid p. 90
5. Cardinal Gerlier quoted in La Croix 18 juillet 1940
More prudent, but no less loyal in his support for Pétain, was Cardinal Liénart, the bishop of Lille. A man of humble origins, he had come to prominence in 1928 when he supported Catholic Trade Unions in a bitter dispute with textile producers in the Nord. This won him the admiration of many, including the Vatican which made him a cardinal that year. Thereafter he took a keen interest in education. It was under his patronage that a group of Catholic intellectuals gathered at Lille in 1931 to discuss ways to make Catholic secondary schools more accessible to working-class families. To accomplish this, they advocated a system of State subsidies. But Liénart doubted they would succeed. Like the other cardinals he was a fierce critic of 'laïcité'. In his pastoral letter for Easter 1939 he judged, 'l'enseignement officiel établi sur la base de la neutralité et de la laïcité...inapte à donner aux enfants l'éducation qui leur convient.' The defeat of 1940 confirmed his worst fears about educating children outside of the teachings of God.


The remaining cardinal was Alfred Baudrillart, Rector of the Institut Catholique at Paris. At eighty-one years of age Baudrillart had lived through three wars with Germany. He had also lived through the bitter conflicts of the 1880s over education. In the early 1900s he had been a fierce critic of the Republican legislation excluding religious orders from teaching. Even so, he had played an active part in the 'Union Sacrée' of 1914, helping to organise the distribution of anti-German propaganda. After the war he resumed his attacks on the Republic and became fanatically anti-Bolshevik. In 1940 he believed that France was on the brink of a communist revolution and was frightened of a repetition of the Paris Commune of 1871. To prevent this he urged France to rally round Pétain and to cement an alliance with Germany to combat the evil threat of communism. He subsequently developed close ties with the collaborationists at Paris, occasionnally writing articles for La Gerbe, the anti-Semitic newspaper of Alphonse de Chateaubriand. In 1941 he sat on the committee of the Légion des Volontaires Français

1. See Mgr Grente Le Cardinal Baudrillart (Paris, Orais, 1942)
2. A. Baudrillart L'Enseignement Catholique dans la France Contemporaine Etudes et Discours (Paris, Bloud, 1910). In particular, see his speech of 13 May 1908, 'Les Catholiques ont-ils le droit de désintéresser de la liberté d'enseignement?'
contre le Bolchévisme (LVF) which recruited young Frenchmen to fight on the Eastern Front.' But by then Baudrillart was clearly senile; he died shortly afterwards in 1942.

Apart from the cardinals, metropolitan France had fifteen archbishops in 1940. Although not a monolithic body they did share in their dislike of the 'laïcité' of the old Republic and in their admiration for Pétain. Yet some mention must be made of Mgr Saliège, the archbishop of Toulouse. Like his colleagues Saliège was an opponent of the neutrality of State education. In 1942 he remarked, 'Un fait: il y a cinquante ans, la population était chrétienne. La famille avait des enfants. Le recrutement sacerdotal était satisfaisant. L'école laïque est venue. La politique radicale-socialiste est venue. Peu-à-peu, les populations se sont éloignées de l'Eglise.' He thus looked to the new regime to overturn this laicism. Even so, Saliège was far more conciliatory than other members of the Church hierarchy in his attitude towards the State school. According to his biographer, 'Monseigneur

1. For Baudrillart's role in the Occupation, see Y. Marchasson 'Autour du Cardinal Baudrillart', in Actes: Lyon pp.227-236

avait toujours aimé l'enseignement public; il était loyal envers l'État; il n'envenimait pas les querelles; il aurait préféré les faire s'évanouir. L'enseignement d'État lui paraissait donner les bases humaines et naturelles, nécessaire à la fois, qui les achève. ¹¹ He was also more moderate than other bishops in his attitude towards Pétain. He never accepted the pessimism of Vichy and even admitted that he would prefer a victorious France governed by Léon Blum and the freemasons to a defeated France ruled by the Marshal. ²

These, then, were the leaders of the Church. It was not long before they made their demands known to the government. On 9 July 1940 Gerlier visited Suhard at Paris.³ Top of their agenda was the question of Catholic schools. On 25 July 1940 Liénart made the difficult journey from Lille in the forbidden zone to see Suhard. Once again, they discussed education. From the two meetings a series of draft proposals quickly emerged. These closely resembled those demands presented by Verdier in his memorandum of January 1940.⁴ Firstly, the cardinals

1. Guitton Le Cardinal Saliège p.88
3. Duquesne Les Catholiques Français p.38
recommended that the parish priest should have the right of entry into
the State school to teach the catechism. Secondly, they wanted to see
the removal of the teaching ban on the religious orders. Thirdly, they
advocated State subsidies to Catholic schools. And, finally, they wished
to see the prohibition of any organisation hostile to religious
education. Shortly afterwards these demands were endorsed by the ACA of
the occupied zone meeting on 28 August 1940.

There can be little doubt that these suggestions were received
favourably by the new regime. As has been pointed out, the early Vichy
cabinets were overwhelmingly Catholic in complexion. At their head was,
of course, Marshal Pétain. Although he had been brought up a Catholic
and had been educated by the Dominicans, he was not a fervent believer.²
Du Moulin de Labarthète, his personal secretary, commented,

1. R.O. Paxton Vichy France. Old Guard and New Order 1940-1944
   (New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1972) p.149 (Hereafter Paxton
   Vichy France)

2. For contemporary observations on the extent of Pétain's
   religiosity, see H. Becquart Au Temps du Silence. De Bordeaux
   à Vichy. Souvenirs et Réflexions (Paris, Editions Iris, 1945)
   pp.196-197, and R. Gillouin J'étais l'ami du Maréchal Pétain (Paris,
   Plon, 1966) (Hereafter Becquart Au Temps du Silence and
   Gillouin J'étais l'ami du Maréchal Pétain)
'ses sentiments religieux, hérités d'une vieille lignée de croyants, semblaient, dans l'ensemble, peu nuancés.' Pétain himself remarked that an organ concert on the radio was sufficient to serve his personal needs. Nonetheless, Pétain valued religion highly. Like Maurras he saw it as an essential ingredient in the preservation of social stability. He thereby agreed with the Church in its belief that the policies of the Republic had undermined the moral fibre of France. In his speech to the French people of 20 June 1940, Pétain announced, 'Depuis la victoire de 1918, l'esprit de jouissance l'a emporté sur l'esprit de sacrifice.' Earlier in 1936 he had declared that it was impossible to make anything of a nation which did not possess a soul. Now in 1940 he viewed his task as promoting the moral recovery of France. Pétain further agreed with the Church in the belief that French recovery could only be achieved through a better education of the young. He already held strong views on education. In his eyes, the school was a
preparation for military duty. As such, it should inculcate the traditional values of God, work, country and obedience. However, in the 1930s Pétain considered that the French school no longer fulfilled this task. The educational system, he alleged, had become dominated by anti-patriotic and left-wing elements. He was particularly critical of the 'instituteurs', the State primary school teachers. In 1934 he volunteered to take over the education portfolio in the Doumercque government in order to remove communist sympathisers from their ranks. This link between the military and education remained a constant feature of his thinking. Shortly after the defeat he informed Bullit, the American ambassador to Vichy, that France had lost the war because her teachers were not patriots.

On 15 August 1940 Pétain's thoughts on education were published in an article for La Revue des Deux Mondes. This began with a savage attack on individualism. In the past, maintained Pétain, the school had gone too far in emphasizing the individual. It was now time to educate him how to work within the body of the family and the nation. To achieve

1. For a summary of Pétain's views on education, see Halls The Youth of Vichy France pp.9-10; Griffiths Pétain pp.162-163; and H. Michel Pétain, Laval, Darlan. Trois Politiques? (Paris, Flammarion, 1972) pp.84-85
2. Griffiths Marshal Pétain p.162
3. Paxton Vichy France p.37
4. Marshal Pétain 'L'Education Nationale', in RDM 15 août 1940
this, he rejected the concept of neutrality. 'L'école française', he declared, 'ne prétendra plus à la neutralité. La vie n'est pas neutre; elle consiste à prendre parti hardiment. Il n'y a pas de neutralité possible entre le vrai et le faux, entre le bien et le mal, entre la santé et la maladie, entre l'ordre et le désordre, entre la France et l'anti-France...'. Instead, the school should now teach religious and moral values. Only then would French youth acquire a taste for hard work, discipline and sacrifice.

Similar sentiments were expressed by General Weygand, Minister of Defence in the early months of Vichy. A more fervent Catholic than Pétain, he was a long-standing opponent of 'laïcité'. In 1937 he had written, 'Exclure la religion de l'enseignement, c'est-à-dire de l'un des fondements de la civilisation essentiellement chrétienne de la France; se priver de ses lumières, de ses disciplines et de son esprit de charité, quand il s'agit de former des êtres destinés à vivre dans une société où l'existence des masses est devenue si difficile et si grand le devoir des élites, est une détermination malaisée à justifier.' In 1940 he repeated these criticisms. On 28 June Weygand forwarded a note to Pétain outlining the principles of a new political order. In this, he blamed defeat on a variety of ills including the

1. Général Weygand Comment Élever Nos Fils? (Paris, Flammarion, 1937) p.6 (Hereafter Weygand Comment Élever Nos Fils?)
'esprit de jouissance et de facilité.' It was thus necessary to reform the educational system and to promote the values of 'Dieu, Patrie, Famille, Travail'.

There were several other prominent Catholics in the early Vichy governments. Raphael Alibert, Minister of Justice until January 1941, was a recent convert 'who burned with the ardour of a neophyte.'

A fervent monarchist, a supporter of Action Française and a close friend of Pétain, he was to undertake a series of measures discriminating against freemasons and Jews. He was also partly responsible for the law of 3 September 1940 which restored the right to teach to religious orders. Another fervent Catholic was Pierre Caziot, Minister of Agriculture until April 1942. He valued Catholicism as an essential ingredient in the recovery of France. Yet not all members of the early Vichy cabinets shared these views. Paul Baudouin, Minister of Foreign Affairs until the end of October 1940, described himself both as a Catholic and as an anticlerical. A former Inspector of Finance, he was worried by Church attempts to overturn the secular laws on education. On 17 June 1940, he noted in his diary, 'J'ai commencé ma journée en recevant le Cardinal Gerlier auquel je n'ai caché combien je déplore l'activité des ecclésiastiques qui préconisent la suppression

1. Paxton Vichy France p.152
2. Please see Chapter Six
des lois laïques. J'ai dit au Cardinal que je considérais cette attitude comme dangereuse, qu'il ne fallait à aucun prix que la situation actuelle apparaisse comme une revanche sinon de l'église, du moins des gens d'église.' More noted anticlericals included Pierre Laval and Admiral Darlan. Du Moulin de Labarthète remarked, 'Pierre Laval n'avait pas la moindre conviction religieuse. Quant à l'amiral Darlan, il dispensait, avec d'ardeur la blogue voltarienne et le juron marin, pour que l'on pût subodorer qu'il ne connaissait les curés qu'à travers le wagon des fumeurs.' The presence of such men was always to exert a restraining influence on the more clerical ministers at Vichy.

Yet what of the Education Ministers themselves? Altogether there were six of these. The first three - Albert Rivaud, Emile Mireaux and Georges Ripert - were in power respectively from 17 June 1940 to 13 December 1940. They may be best described as traditional, right wing Maurrassian Catholics. As such, they were opponents of 'laïcité'. Their policies aimed at dismantling the educational structure of the Third Republic. Yet they shied away from the more radical demands of the Church, fearing an anticlerical backlash. Their successor - Jacques Chevalier - was free of such qualms. A devout and fervent Catholic, his brief spell as minister between 14 December 1940 and 22 February 1941 marked the high point of clerical influence at Vichy. He, in turn, was

1. Baudouin Neuf Mois Au Gouvernement p.253
2. Du Moulin de Labarthète Le Temps des Illusions p.299
succeeded by a more moderate believer, Jérôme Carcopino. In power until April 1942, Carcopino hoped to heal the religious divisions stirred up by Chevalier. Far less conciliatory was Abel Bonnard, minister until the Liberation. Bonnard differed from his predecessors in that he was a non-believer, an anticlerical and a fascist. Thus we may see that Catholic influence within education had begun to recede as early as February 1941.

Rivaud became minister on 17 June 1940. A professor of philosophy at the Sorbonne, his appointment provided great encouragement to the Church. Before the war he had belonged to the Cercle Fustel de Coulanges, a right-wing pressure group closely associated with the Action Française. There he had chastised State education for the undue emphasis it placed on science and reason. In 1940 he repeated these criticisms. 'Notre effondrement', he remarked, 'a une seule origine: la fuite instinctive de trop de Français devant la vérité... L'Ecole reflétais des erreurs ou des négligences anciennes de l'esprit. Elle les aggravait et les repandait doctoralement.' But Rivaud only survived in office for twenty-six days. His dismissal was probably due to his anti-

1. For Rivaud's background, see *Le Temps* 18 juin 1940
3. *La Croix* 29/30 septembre 1940
German views, a decided embarrassment to the new regime in June 1940. In 1938 he had published Le Relèvement de l'Allemagne, a critical study on the origins of Nazism. Consequently, Rivaud accomplished little in his month as minister. Should he have survived in office then it is conceivable that he would have pursued measures favourable to Catholic schools. In November 1941 Rivaud published an article in La Revue des Deux Mondes entitled 'L'Avenir de l'Enseignement Libre'. In this, he celebrated the history and achievements of Catholic education. He was critical of the secular laws on education of the 1880s. 'Nous avons vu', he remarked, 'la République molester l'école privée qui, le plus souvent, ne la menaçait pas. Elle a chassé des religieuses inoffensives ou bienfaisantes, dispersé des collèges où l'on travaillait pour la France avec un zèle passionné.' After half a century of such conflicts Rivaud looked forward to a new era of co-operation between public and private education. To promote this, he suggested that all official examinations should be opened to pupils from 'enseignement libre' and that inspectors should be recruited from both educational systems. He even advocated that State schools should be closed down in strongly

1. Halls The Youth of Vichy France p.17
2. A.Rivaud Le Relèvement de l'Allemagne (Paris, Armand Colin, 1938)
3. A.Rivaud 'L'Avenir de l'Enseignement Libre', in RDM 15 novembre 1941
4. ibid p.145
Catholic areas where there was no demand for them. Their former students, he continued, would then go to the local 'école privée' instead. Yet while this article was well-received in the Catholic press, its proposals were far from radical.

Rivaud was replaced on 12 July 1940 by Mireaux. A graduate of the Ecole Normale Supérieure, Mireaux was both a distinguished academic and economist. In 1931 he had become co-director of Le Temps and in 1935 was elected senator for the Haute-Pyrénées. In 1939 he had little confidence in a French victory. Elie J. Bois, the former editor of Le Petit Parisien, remarked, 'M. Mireaux... had walked about since the beginning of the hostilities with a face as scared as the utterances with which he justified it. Anybody unlucky to sit next or opposite to him for an evening at table was ill with pessimism for the night.' As Bois implied, Mireaux's appointment was probably a reward for having helped Laval persuade the National Assembly to suspend the 1875 Constitution. Ultimately, however, his former connections with

1. After the war Rivaud was put on trial (as were his successors at the Ministry of Education) on charges of endangering State security. However, he was released - as were Mireaux, Ripert and Carcopino - because he had helped the Resistance. Only Chevalier and Bonnard received sentences. See Halls The Youth of Vichy France p.17

2. Le Temps 14 juillet 1940


parliament cost him dear. His dismissal on 6 September 1940 was probably due to Pétain's distaste for Republican politicians. Nonetheless, Mireaux helped to promulgate a wide range of legislation in his fifty-five days as minister. On 17 July 1940 a law granted the State the right to dismiss any civil servant, including teachers. Another law of the same date placed severe nationality restrictions on public employees. A circular of 22 July abolished the 'comités consultatifs', local educational committees dominated by the 'instituteurs'. A further law of 13 August made freemasons declare their lodge. Finally, on 3 September religious orders were granted the right to teach. Thus Mireaux went some way in meeting the demands of the cardinals of July 1940. In fact, the purpose of this legislation was aimed more at breaking the power of the 'instituteurs' than with helping the Church, but this was of little concern to Catholics in 1940.

Mireaux's replacement was Ripert, who took charge on 6 September 1940. A specialist in maritime law and dean of the Faculty of Law at Paris, Ripert was more noted for his reactionary views on Trade

2. These changes are examined in more detail in Chapter Seven
Unions than for his clericalism.' On 1 October 1940, to the delight of the Church, he abolished the 'écoles normales'. These were the teacher-training colleges of the old Republic reputed to be strongholds of 'laïcité'. Later that month the Syndicat National des Instituteurs (SNI), the teachers' union, was outlawed. In its place Vichy instituted a number of State-run professional associations. At the same time, Mireaux abolished the Oeuvres Scolaires, educational charities often run by left-wing 'instituteurs'. Only a few days earlier on 15 October the Caisse des Ecoles, a local charitable fund for State pupils, was opened to Catholic students. On 13 December Ripert dismantled the 'conseils départementaux', consultative educational committees similar in function to the 'comités consultatifs'. Meanwhile, a number of Republican textbooks were removed from use and new censorship procedures introduced. Lastly, in order to give children some notion of God, an 'arrêté' of 15 November 1940 restored the 'devoirs envers Dieu' within the ethics syllabus of State primary schools.

It is extremely likely, however, that this final move (and that on the Caisse des Ecoles) was the work of Chevalier, Ripert's secretary general of education. It was not long before Chevalier took over as minister. On 13 December 1940 Ripert fell victim to a dramatic cabinet

1. A good résumé of this legislation is given in Halls The Youth of Vichy France pp.18-20. Also see Chapter Seven for a fuller discussion of these changes.
reshuffle. In a ruse to rid himself of Laval (whom he feared was negotiating secretly with the Germans) Pétain asked all his ministers to resign. Because the Marshal had used similar tactics in the past to restructure his cabinet, nobody was suspicious of his motives and each minister complied with his instructions. However, only the resignations of Laval and Ripert were accepted. It is understandable why Pétain wanted to replace Laval, but less clear why he wished to be rid of Ripert. Three explanations have been put forward. First, it may have been that Pétain wanted to give Chevalier ministerial rank in order that he could conduct negotiations with Lord Halifax, his former Oxford classmate, to improve Franco-British relations. Second, it is possible that Ripert wanted to resign. He had disliked Chevalier and

1. For one account of 13 December 1940 see M. Martin du Gard *Chronique de Vichy 1940-1944* (Paris, Flammarion, 1948) pp.125-133
2. Paxton *Vichy France* p.88. Also see J. Chevalier 'Un Témoignage sur deux points d'histoire', in *Ecrits de Paris juillet 1953* (Hereafter Chevalier 'Témoignage')
increasingly resented his policy interventions. Third, as du Moulin de Labarthète believed, it may have been that Ripert was simply an innocent victim of Pétain's ministerial re-ordering.¹

As has already been remarked, Chevalier's appointment on 14 December 1940 marked the high point of clerical influence at Vichy. Like his predecessors Chevalier was a distinguished academic. After studying at the Ecole Normale Supérieure and briefly at Oxford, he had taught philosophy at Grenoble where he became Dean of Letters in 1931.² While at Grenoble he published a number of works on Pascal and Descartes, and became a close friend of Henri Bergson. He also took a keen interest in educational affairs. In the 1930s he was associated with the Union des Maîtres de l'Enseignement Libre, a right-wing pressure group dedicated to the promotion of Catholic values. In 1937, to the consternation of the Popular Front government, he was invited by Franco to prepare a plan for the reorganisation of education in Spain.³ In 1940 he was a fanatical supporter of Pétain, who was also his godfather. Later in February 1941 he published France, Pétain m'a dit... Les Préceptes du Maréchal. Appel aux Jeunes, a glowing tribute to the values of

1. Du Moulin de Labarthète Le Temps des Illusions pp.68-69
2. La Croix 15/16 septembre 1940
the National Revolution.'

Chevalier's appointment, first as secretary general and then as minister, created considerable excitement in the Catholic press. Whereas La Croix, considered by many as the official daily newspaper of the Church, only devoted two sentences to the appointment of Ripert, it regularly published lengthy features on Chevalier. For example, on 15/16 September 1940 it remarked, 'M. Jacques Chevalier est dans la tradition la plus haute et la plus pure de la philosophie spiritualiste et catholique.' The Union Catholique de Rodez declared, 'Associé désormais à l'œuvre de restauration nationale, M. Jacques Chevalier est à sa place. Personne ne semblait mieux désigné que lui par les événements.' Members of the Church hierarchy also paid their tributes. In his pastoral letter of February 1941 Mgr Piguet, the bishop of Clermont, quoted extensively from Chevalier's declarations on education. Others were less complimentary. Du Moulin de Labarthète observed, 'c'était

2. La Croix 8 septembre 1940
3. La Croix 15/16 septembre 1940
4. Union Catholique de Rodez quoted in La Croix 26 septembre 1940
5. SR de Clermont 8 février 1941, no.6, p.71
un prosélyte, une sorte de Templier, de moine ligueur, qu'animait une exaltation parfois troublante, et que le sens de la mesure n'habitait point.'

Fired with a deep spiritual zeal which bordered on fanaticism, Chevalier considered that above all France's mission was a Christian one. In early 1941 Chevalier quoted Saint Clovis who had remarked, 'Apprenez que le royaume de France est prédestiné par Dieu à la défense de l'Eglise de Jésus Christ. Le royaume sera grand entre tous les royaumes de la terre. Il sera victorieux et prospère tant qu'il restera fidèle à Rome et à sa foi.' Thus, once inside the Education Ministry, Chevalier considered it was his duty to do as much as possible to meet the demands of the Church. We have already seen how as secretary general to Ripert he had opened the Caisse des Ecoles to Catholic pupils and reintroduced the 'devoirs envers Dieu' within the ethics syllabus of State schools. As minister he built on these foundations. A law of 6 January 1941 gave communes the opportunity to subsidize confessional schools. Another law of the same date made religious education an optional subject in the 'école primaire', a move that won the warm approbation of Cardinal Gerlier.

But not everyone was pleased. The Germans, who had opposed Chevalier's appointment on account of his intense Catholicism, were

1. Du Moulin de Labarthète Le Temps des Illusions p.301
2. Chevalier France. Pétain m'a dit p.24
especially troubled by the law on the catechism. The collaborationist press shared similar concerns. On 13/14 February 1941 *Les Nouveaux Temps*, the pro-German newspaper of Jean Luchaire, accused Chevalier of being a man of the Jesuits. Nor did all Catholics support Chevalier. His measures on the catechism and the 'devoirs envers Dieu' revealed divisions within the Church which had not been so readily apparent in 1940. Liberal Catholics, fronted by Emmanuel Mounier, believed Chevalier was moving too fast and was in danger of provoking anticlericalism. Members of the hierarchy were also beginning to have their doubts. Cardinal Suhard, always wary of becoming too involved in politics, was disconcerted by the stormy reaction Chevalier had provoked. Finally, members of the Vichy government became exasperated by Chevalier's clericalism and by his high-handed methods. Even Pétain appears to have been troubled by these criticisms and moved Chevalier to the less sensitive post of Minister of Health and the Family where he remained until illness forced him to retire in August 1941. Eventually Chevalier returned to his post at Grenoble. He was not to know another opportunity to assist the Church.

1. For a fuller discussion of these changes see Chapter Three.


3. At the Liberation Chevalier was tried for having supported the pro-German Milice and was sentenced to twenty years hard labour. See P. Novick *The Resistance Versus Vichy. The Purge of Collaborators in Liberated France* (London, Chatto and Windus, 1968) p.222
Initially there was some confusion as to who should succeed Chevalier. The Germans wanted Bonnard, noted for his collaborationist views, whereas Pétain preferred André Bellesort, the secretary of the Académie Française.¹ To avoid disagreement, the Marshal settled upon Carcopino who was appointed in late February 1941. A great classical scholar, in 1930 Carcopino had been made Director of the Ecole de Rome. In 1940 he had become Director of the Ecole Normale Supérieure, where he had also been a student. Yet as a compromise appointment, Carcopino did not please everyone. Although the Germans reconciled themselves to him,² the collaborationist press were disappointed that Bonnard had not been chosen and published a number of stinging criticisms of the new minister. One of these attacks, which appeared in La Gerbe of 7 August 1941, proved particularly embarrassing to the Church because its author had been recommended to the paper by Cardinal Baudrillart.³ This led to an apology by Suhard who excused the Rector of the Institut

1. Halls The Youth of Vichy France p.22
2. AN AJ 40 563, Note of 28 February 1941
3. The author of this attack appears to have been R.Voize, a 'professeur' at the Lycée Louis-le-Grand at Paris. On 7 August 1941 he accused Carcopino of appointing 'professeurs' hostile to Pétain and to Germany (La Gerbe 7 août 1941 contained in AN AJ 40 563). Henri Dodier, a high-ranking official in the Ministry of Education, also comments on this episode, but suggests that the article was written by a certain 'S.V.'. It seems likely that Dodier has confused the initials. See Dodier A la Recherche de la Paix Écoute pp.30-34
Catholique on the grounds of his old age: 'Malheureusement, cet effort prolongé au physique et au moral a laissé des traces d'indéniable fatigue sur cet octogénaire hier encore si robuste.' Suhard even admitted that at the last ACA it had not been possible to discuss confidential matters in the presence of Baudrillart because he could not be trusted to exercise discretion. But Baudrillart was not the only member of the Church hierarchy unhappy at Carcopino's appointment. As Dodier remarked, 'Je ne crois pas que la substitution de M. Jérôme Carcopino à M.Jacques Chevalier eût jamais inquiété l'archevêque de Paris; mais il est certain qu'elle avait fait naître des regrets dans certains régions de l'épiscopat de province, où la crainte avait été exprimée qu'un historien fût moins apte qu'un philosophe à l'apaisement des antiques rivalités scolaires.'

Despite these misgivings Carcopino genuinely wanted to find a solution to the schools question. As a moderate Catholic who was anxious to accommodate all shades of opinion, he had been disconcerted by Chevalier's legislation on the catechism and the 'devoirs envers Dieu'. Carcopino considered these measures as a threat to religious peace. Thus he accepted his appointment as minister on the condition that be

1. Dodier A la Recherche de la Paix Scolaire p.33
2. ibid p.26
could restore the traditional 'neutralité' of the State school.' He quickly went about his task. On 10 March religious instruction was again made a voluntary subject. At the same time, the 'devoirs envers Dieu' were altered to the more neutral, 'devoirs envers...nos semblables (respect des familles, de la patrie, de la pensée autrui et des croyances religieuses). Carcopino explained these moves in a speech to the nation of 16 March 1941. In this, he stressed the need for gradualism and reconciliation. To encourage this he promised to draw to a close the punitive measures taken against the 'instituteurs'. These changes caused some disappointment in Catholic circles, yet a few members of the hierarchy, notably Cardinal Suhard and Mgr Feltin of Bordeaux, accepted that Carcopino had acted for the best.

Henceforth Carcopino was more concerned with the internal reorganisation of State education. On 15 August 1941 he promulgated a series of wide-ranging reforms intended to promote a 'culture générale'. Nonetheless, the Church was to secure one further concession from Vichy during Carcopino's tenure as minister: the granting of State subsidies to Catholic schools. As will be seen in Chapter Eight, the

1. Carcopino also laid down two other conditions on his appointment: that he could maintain the traditional liberties of the University and that he could return to his post as Director of the Ecole Normale Supérieure when his term of office was over. See Carcopino Souvenirs de Sept Ans p.271

2. For a commentary on these reforms, see Halls The Youth of Vichy France pp.26-31; Paxton Vichy France pp.159-160; and F.Ponteil Histoire de l'Enseignement en France, Les Grandes Étapes (Paris, Sirey, 1966)
hierarchy had been pressing the regime for financial aid since the beginning of the Occupation. After months of delicate negotiations, the government eventually gave way. Legislation of 2 November 1941 entitled private elementary schools to State subsidies, later established to be worth up to 75 per cent of an individual school's running costs. Yet in providing such generous assistance Carcopino was anxious not to give vent to anticlericalism, especially among the 'instituteurs'. As a result, aid was described as an exceptional and temporary measure. The State was also granted the right to inspect subsidised schools. Lastly, Chevalier's legislation on the Caisse des Ecoles and communal subventions was abolished. This solution came as a disappointment to Church leaders who had hoped that subsidies to private schools would be recognised as an indisputable right.

In any case, by November 1941 the hierarchy was anxious to distance itself from the regime. Although the cardinals and archbishops retained their admiration for Pétain, they were worried that the Church was in danger of compromising itself too much with the government and was at risk of abandoning its traditional policy of neutrality towards the State. This fear had been expressed during the debates over Chevalier's legislation on the catechism. Furthermore, doubts were beginning to creep in about the legitimacy of Vichy. In turn, these anxieties were expressed by the ACA of the occupied zone, meeting at Paris on 15 January 1941. In a letter to the Pope, the hierarchy announced, 'Absolument décidé à nous tenir sur le plan religieux, nous entendons éviter tout agissement politique ou partisan et rester uniquement
appliqués au bien spirituel des âmes et au soulagement des infortunes. Nous professons dans le domaine social et civique un loyalisme complet envers le pouvoir établi du gouvernement de la France; nous demandons à nos fidèles d'entretenir cet esprit.' No longer was Vichy 'le pouvoir légitime', but merely 'le pouvoir établi'. This distinction was also made by the hierarchy of the unoccupied zone, meeting at Lyon on 16 February 1941. A few months later, on 24 July 1941, a new text was formulated by the ACA of the occupied zone, which was endorsed on the 6 September by the ACA in the South. This took the form of a declaration:

Nous voulons que, sans inféodation, soit pratiqué un loyalisme sincère et complet envers le pouvoir établi.
Nous vénérons le chef de l'Etat et nous demandons instamment que se réalise autour de lui l'union de tous les Français. L'union toujours, est principe de force.

As has been remarked, such an episcopal declaration of support for a head of the French State is remarkable for the twentieth century. Nonetheless, the hierarchy, in refusing all 'inféodation' to 'le pouvoir établi', had significantly moderated its position in regard to Vichy.

1. Duquesne Les Catholiques Français p. 50, and Mgr Guerry L'Eglise Catholique p. 235 et seq
2. La Vie Catholique p. 65
3. Duquesne Les Catholiques Français pp. 54–55
Yet while distancing itself politically from Vichy, the hierarchy was anxious to improve its negotiating machinery with the government. There was a particular need to regularise the conduct of educational affairs. Although the ACA possessed a Comité National de l'Enseignement Libre to help formulate policy, this did not have any direct links with the government. Under the Republic there had been little point. Now there was a need, the Church was slow to respond. For much of 1941 negotiations with the State were carried out by individual members of the hierarchy. For example, Cardinal Suhard dealt almost exclusively with the preparations for the law of 2 November 1941. Yet in September 1941 the ACA created a Bureau de Coordination et de Liaison, attached to the Comité National de L'Enseignement Libre, to communicate with the Ministry of Education at Paris. At its head was Mgr Beaussart, the auxiliary bishop of Paris. But his task was not an easy one. At roughly the same time as his appointment, Mgr Chappoulie, the former Director of the Oeuvres Pontificales Missionnaires, was made the ACA's representative at Vichy. Chappoulie was authorised by the hierarchy to deal with all aspects of Church/State relations, including education. This soon led to problems. It was not long before the two men, Beaussart at Paris and Chappoulie at Vichy, were pursuing contradictory policies. This annoyed the Ministry of Education which argued that only Beaussart

1. AN F17 13365, Note of 24 September 1941
was accredited to handle educational affairs.¹ The auxiliary bishop of Paris was also frustrated in his job and on 11 November 1942 he handed in his resignation.² This came as a disappointment to the Church, yet the hierarchy acknowledged that he had been placed in an awkward situation. In a letter of 2 December 1942 Liénart even admitted that the appointment of Chappoulie as the ACA's representative at Vichy had undermined Beaussart's episcopal dignity as a bishop.³ Beaussart denied this and claimed that his resignation was 'uniquement motivée par l'impossibilité où je me trouvais de remplir la mission qui m'avait été confiée.'⁴ Nonetheless, it is significant that Beaussart's replacement - Mgr Aubry, Vicar General of Orléans - came from the lower ranks of the hierarchy. At the same time, Cardinal Suhard gave assurances to the government that Aubry would work in close cooperation with Chappoulie.⁵

Even more damaging for Church/State relations was the appointment of Abel Bonnard as Minister of Education in April 1942. With the return to power of Laval on 18 April, it was clear that Carcopino could not remain

1. AN F17 13365, Letter of Bonnard to Liénart, 11 November 1942
2. AN F17 13365, Letter of Beaussart to Ministry of Education, 11 November 1942
3. AN F17 13365, Letter of Liénart to Beaussart, 2 December 1942
4. AN F17 13365, Letter of Beaussart to Liénart, 7 December 1942
5. AN F17 13365, Letter of Suhard to Bonnard, 23 January 1943
in office for long and he duly returned to his former post at the Ecole Normale Supérieure where he remained until the end of the war. For a brief moment, it appeared that Bernard Fay, Vichy's head of the Bibliothèque Nationale, might be his successor, but he stood little chance in view of German support for Bonnard. With Carcopino's departure, the educational policy of Vichy entered a new phase. As the government became more and more subservient to Germany, there was little attempt at constructive reform and even less sympathy for the ideas of the Church.

Bonnard was a man of a very different stamp to his predecessors at the Ministry of Education. Whereas they had all been distinguished academics, Bonnard was an essayist, poet and journalist. He had first come to prominence in 1905 when he won a prize for his poetry. During the First World War he distinguished himself and was awarded the Croix de Guerre. Six years later he received the Grand Prize for literature from the Académie Française. In 1932 he was elected to the Académie and in 1940 was made its chancellor. In the meantime, he had developed close ties with the extreme Right, in particular with the

1. Halls The Youth of Vichy France p.34
Action Française. In 1925 he wrote articles for Le Nouveau Siècle, the fascist daily of Georges Valois. By 1936 he had graduated to Je Suis Partout and, in the same year, published Les Modérés, a stinging attack on the Republic. By then he had become an admirer of Nazism and in 1937 he made a trip to Germany. There he was granted an interview with Hitler and developed a close friendship with Otto Abetz. It is no surprise, therefore, that in 1941 Bonnard was a prominent figure in collaborationist circles. Indeed, in April 1942 Bonnard was more noted for his collaborationism than for his ideas on education. Although Bonnard, like Rivaud, had been a member of the Cercle Fustel de Coulanges, he had devoted little time to the problems of education. One of the most important of his works on the subject, L'Eloge de l'Ignorance, had appeared in 1926. This was fiercely critical of the State 'instituteurs' and urged that the education of the masses should be given a practical and technical content. Yet in 1942 it was his private life that attracted most attention. He was a well-known homosexual. Jean Zay remarked, 'La moralité personnelle de M. Abel Bonnard est connue dans l'Université; son avènement fera sensation.'

2. A. Bonnard Les Modérés (Paris, Grasset, 1936)
4. Halls The Youth of Vichy France p. 34
5. Zay Souvenirs et Solitude p. 259
Pétain himself, who disliked his new minister, described Bonnard as the 'Gestapette' (a word derived from 'Gestapo' and 'tapette', French slang for 'queer'). The Resistance also commented on Bonnard's private life. In March 1944 Les Cahiers de la Libération remarked, 'Ce parasite salonnard et efféminé, ce pique-assiette de la grande farce proustienne, avait fait carrière de causeur professionnel à la table des Guermantes, où il avait fini par s'asseoir dans un fauteuil académique.'

Such a man was unlikely to endear himself to the Church. Only a few clerics wrote to congratulate Bonnard on his appointment, and most of these were known supporters of collaborationism. On the other hand, Bonnard himself felt little empathy towards the clergy. Although he was a close friend of Cardinal Baudrillart, he was a fierce anticlerical and expressed no personal need for religion. La France Socialiste of 23 April 1942 hailed his appointment as 'Le Retour à la Laïcité'.

Certainly this laicism was reflected in the composition of his cabinet. Whereas his predecessors had chosen university professors and inspectors, Bonnard preferred former schoolteachers and men of letters like himself. His cabinet comprised: Serge Jeanneret, a right-wing 'instituteur' and former editor of Ecole Française; Jacques Bosquet, a

1. P. Jardin Vichy Boyhood. An Insider's View of the Pétain Regime (London, Faber and Faber, 1975) p.58
2. Les Cahiers de la Libération mars 1944 contained in AN 71 AJ 64
3. These letters may be found in: AN F17 13342
4. La France Socialiste 29 avril 1942 contained in AN F17 13357
Nazi sympathiser and former 'professeur' at the Lycée Voltaire; and André Lavenir, a one-time member of the SDI. Together, these men belonged to a secularist tradition. They cared little about pleasing the Church. Dodier comments on how the warm relationship that had existed between the Ministry of Education and the Archevêché de Paris under Carcopino was only a memory after April 1942.

It was not long before the anticlericalism of Bonnard's Ministry made itself felt. At the beginning of 1943 the Rector of the Catholic Faculty at Lille wrote to complain about grants for higher education. Since February 1941, he remarked, students in Catholic secondary schools had been entitled to compete for national scholarships which could be used for either private or public education. Yet in January 1943 several Catholic students were told that they would only receive scholarships if they went to a State university. When Bonnard looked into the matter he discovered that Carcopino had held back grants for 'raisons d'opportunité'. He decided to do the same. Bonnard also discriminated against Catholics in technical education. A law of 4 August 1942 prevented Catholic technical schools from awarding their own certificates. Bonnard justified this move on the grounds that it would

1. Dodier A la Recherche de la Paix Scolaire pp.47-48
2. AN F17 13365, Letter of the Rector of the Catholic Faculty at Lille to Bonnard, 15 January 1943
3. AN F17 13365, 'Note' of 1 February 1943
improve standards. He also pointed out that State examinations were now open to all. Yet, as Mgr Aubry maintained, the law devalued the worth of Catholic education as it meant that several private institutions were no longer able to compete on the same basis as their State counterparts.' A few months later Bonnard dealt the Church another blow when he refused to consider subsidies to private technical schools despite urgent pleas by Cardinal Liénart.²

We may see, therefore, that Bonnard was disinclined to help the Church. Nor was the regime itself as favourably disposed towards clerical demands. The last major concession to the Church had been the law of 8 April 1942 releasing religious orders from the need for authorisation.³ Yet this had been rushed through before Laval's return to power. With Laval now in charge the government was distinctly less clerical in complexion. Apart from Pétain and Joseph Barthélémy (Minister of Justice January 1941 - March 1943) there were few noted Catholics at Vichy. Their numbers were even fewer following the Occupation of all of France in November 1942. Thereafter Vichy became more subservient to German demands. This was reflected in the stepping up of measures against the Jews and the introduction of the Service du

1. AN F17 13390 'Voeux exprimés par Mgr Aubry à M.le Ministre de l'Education Nationale au cours de son audience du 31 mars 1943', report dated 1 April 1941
2. AN F17 13365, Letter of Bonnard to Cathala, 11 May 1943, comments on Liénart's request
3. Please see Chapter Six
Travail Obligatoire (STO) which forced young Frenchmen into compulsory work service in Germany. In turn, the Church was again compelled to reconsider its attitude towards the regime. Yet, as before, it adopted an ambivalent position. At a special meeting of December 1942 members of the ACA reaffirmed their support for Pétain, but admitted that the powers of the government were limited following the occupation of Southern France. They also warned against detracting from the authority of the regime at a time when it faced a number of difficulties. Finally, they added, 'Il faut éviter de compromettre l'Eglise en l'enféodant au pouvoir et donc s'abstenir de toute déclaration sensationnelle d'attachement.' Such statements did little to clarify the Church's position. While the hierarchy had continued to distance itself from Vichy, it had not completely broken its allegiance to the regime and still sought to court its favours.

This was certainly the case in education. Aware of a rapidly changing situation, the hierarchy began to look for ways by which to consolidate the gains the Church had already made. Not only did these appear threatened by the Germans, there was also the fear that Laval or Bonnard might claw back some of the concessions Vichy had originally granted. A few astute members of the hierarchy, conscious of Allied victories in North Africa, might even have been looking ahead to a future date when Vichy was no longer the government of France. Yet how

1. Duquesne Les Catholiques Français pp.275-276
did the Church intend to safeguard these gains? One possible means was through a concordat. Before the war a number of concordats — notably those concluded in Poland and Bavaria in 1925 and Italy in 1929 — had conceded important privileges to the Church within education. However, as we shall see, by 1943 a concordat in France was out of the question. A lesser option was for Church and State to draw up a statute for 'enseignement libre'. This would establish the rights of Catholic schools, in particular their entitlement to State subsidies. But even this would prove unobtainable.

The idea of a concordat had first been raised in the summer of 1940. Marc Boegner, the head of the Fédération Protestante, recalls that when he visited Vichy on 26 July there was a great deal of talk about a new settlement between Church and State. A few days later he raised the issue with Cardinal Gerlier, who considered the possibility unlikely. The papacy, maintained Gerlier, would not consider any document which undermined the freedoms granted to the Church by the law of Separation of 1905. Nonetheless, it does appear that other members of the hierarchy gave the matter some thought. Recent research has unearthed a project

1. Excerpts from these concordats may be found in P. Faure L'Ecole et la Cité (Paris, Editions Spes, 1945) pp.327-328
for a concordat, probably dating from the summer of 1940.' The authorship of the document remains unknown, but it may well have been drawn up by a strongly Pétainist bishop such as Mgr Chollet of Cambrai.

As well as dealing with the contentious issue of episcopal appointments, the project had far-reaching implications for education. Article 3 called for the suppression of all discriminatory legislation against the religious orders, whereas Article 4 demanded the inclusion of a weekly lesson of religious instruction in the 'programmes' of State schools.

Although evidence remains impressionistic, it appears likely that this document was discussed - and rejected - by the ACA meeting on 28 August 1940.2 The hierarchy fully understood that any project would require careful presentation and close consultation with the papacy. In the meantime, Church leaders preferred to present their demands separately. As we have seen, this was how they proceeded in education. Nonetheless, the hierarchy does appear to have raised the question of a concordat - in theory at least - with the government. Evidence to support this comes from a long memorandum of 20 October 1940 on Church/State relations. This had been composed by Pierre Sauret, the Director of Cults at Vichy.3 In it, Sauret argued that the absence of

1. F.Delpech 'Le Projet de Concordat de l'Eté 1940', in Actes: Lyon pp.185-188
2. ibid p.187
3. ibid p.186. A copy of this memorandum - 'Mémoire à Consulter pour une Politique Religieuse de l'Etat' - may also be found in AN 2 AG 492 CC72 A.
spiritual values had been an important factor behind the defeat. It was thus necessary for the State to promote the moral regeneration of France and to seek a rapprochement with the Church. To achieve this, Sauret advocated that the State should make a number of concessions to the Church. In particular, he favoured a relaxation of the laws governing the religious orders. (Interestingly he makes no mention of the question of religious instruction.) At the same time, Sauret advocated that the Church should surrender something of its independence by allowing the State a greater say in such matters as the nomination of bishops and priests. This way, concluded Sauret, neither Church nor State would predominate over one another. It appears clear, therefore, that the Church did raise the issue of a concordat with Vichy and it seems that the regime was sympathetic to the idea. Yet both sides viewed the question from their own point of view and were reluctant to make concessions.

It remains extremely uncertain how negotiations proceeded after 1940, if indeed they proceeded at all. It seems probable that the ACA discussed the possibility of a concordat in June 1941, yet no proposals emerged from their meeting.' By the end of the year the hierarchy again appears to have been considering the question. In a letter of 25 October 1941 Mgr Chollet informed Vichy's Direction de la Jeunesse that, 'L'Episcopat français pense toujours que la nature et la gravité des

1. F. Delpech 'Le Projet de Concordat de l'Êté 1940', in Actes: Lyon p.187
problèmes religieux posés par l'heure actuelle postulent des conversations directes entre le Saint-Siège et l'État français, et la préparation d'un concordat comme ceux qui ont été, ces derniers temps, élaborés entre plusieurs États et l'Eglise.' Yet little progress seems to have been made by the summer of 1942. A résumé of a dispatch of 8 June 1942 written by Léon Bérard commented: 'Dans cette dépêche, notre Ambassadeur expose les traits communs qu'offrent les concordats qui ont été conclus depuis le pontificat de Benoît XV jusqu'au pontificat de Pie XII. Il remarque que cette étude n'a pas, à vrai dire, un intérêt d'actualité mais il pense qu'en étudiant les traits généraux des nouveaux concordats il pourra préparer la voie à ceux qui auront un jour à négocier un tel accord.' Bérard concluded that the papacy was generally amenable to the idea of a concordat, but believed it would be difficult to reach agreement over such thorny issues as episcopal nominations. Nonetheless, there was considerable excitement in Catholic circles when Cardinal Suhard travelled to Rome at the beginning of 1943. It was strongly rumoured that he was going to set in motion

1. Chollet quoted in Duquesne Les Catholiques Français p.104
2. AN 2 AG 543 CC142 Troisième Dossier, 'Résumé d'une dépêche de M. Léon Bérard Ambassadeur de France près de Saint-Siège en date de 8 Juin 1942'
3. AN 2 AG 492 CC72 A, 'Note' of 22 January 1943
negotiations for a concordat. But these rumours soon proved unfounded. A
government note of 3 February 1943 tersely remarked, 'les milieux
ecclésiastiques de Vichy estiment que la question du Concordat est loin
d'avoir été résolue, lors du récent voyage du Cardinal Suhard à Rome.'
Thereafter, the question does not appear to have figured in Church/State
relations.

Because of the lack of any hard evidence it remains unclear what
advantages the conclusion of a concordat might have brought the Church
within education. It seems probable that the hierarchy would have
insisted that any new settlement embodied the right of Catholic schools
to State subsidies and the freedom of association for religious orders.
A more ambitious proposal might have been the inclusion of religious
instruction as an integral part of the State school timetable. Yet it is
difficult to see how Vichy would have given in on this issue following
the furore created by Chevalier's legislation on the catechism. It is
even more difficult to imagine how Church and State could have reached
agreement on wider questions such as episcopal appointments. As we have
seen, by 1943 the Church was wary of Vichy and was determined not to
surrender any of its independence. Yet the greatest obstacle facing the
conclusion of a concordat was the opposition of the papacy. Although the
Vatican had some sympathy with the aims of the National Revolution, by

1. AN 2 AG 492 CC72 A, 'Note' of 3 February 1943
1943 it regarded Vichy as a transitory regime.' As Mgr Valerio Valeri warned, to conclude an agreement with such a government was to try and build on shifting sands.²

In the absence of a concordat, the more limited option open to the Church was to secure a statute for 'enseignement libre'. This was seen as a particularly effective means of securing State assistance for Catholic schools. It will be recalled that the law of 2 November 1941 had granted subsidies to private schools, but only as a temporary expedient and not as an inalienable right. Thus throughout 1942 the Church continued to press for further concessions. In turn, Dr Graset, Minister of Health in the Laval government, looked into the question. He produced two draft statutes in November 1942 and July 1943.³ In both of these he recognised that Catholic education continued to face severe economic problems. To alleviate its plight he devised a complicated system by which to improve the salaries of Catholic teachers who were notoriously under-paid. Yet neither set of proposals proved acceptable

1. AN 2 AG 492 CC72 A, Evidence for the papacy's sympathy for Pétain comes from a note of 23 January 1943 on Suhard's trip to Rome. This remarks, 'Le Pape a dit notamment au Cardinal et à Mgr Chappoulie qu'il avait beaucoup de respect et d'admiration pour le Maréchal, non seulement pour tout ce qu'il a fait pour l'Eglise, mais aussi pour ce qu'il fait pour la France elle-même.'

2. Duquesne Les Catholiques Français p.104

to the Church. In a letter of 21 October 1943 Mgr Aubry explained to Pétain's cabinet that Grasset had misinterpreted the structure of Catholic education and, as a result, his suggestions were unworkable.¹ To remedy such defects, in February 1944 the Church drew up its own statute to improve pay and conditions for Catholic teachers.² Although it seems Pétain himself took an interest in this document, the government did not follow up its proposals.

Thus the Church failed to secure any further concessions. In the remaining months of the regime education did not play any significant part in Church/State relations. Bonnard disassociated himself from Catholic requests and was more concerned with ensuring his safe passage from France in case of an Allied invasion.³ Likewise, the Church looked anxiously to the future. The signs were ominous. In Algeria the Consultative Assembly announced its intention of restoring

1. AN 2 AG 609 CM25 B, Letter of Mgr Aubry to Pétain's cabinet, 21 October 1943
2. AN 2 AG 609 CM25 B, 'Statut du Personnel de l'Enseignement Libre', 9 February 1944
3. Following the Allied invasion of France Bonnard left with other members of the Vichy government for the castle of Sigmaringen. From there he made a journey to Spain where he settled in exile. Meanwhile, in Paris he was condemned to death 'in absentia'. In 1960 he finally returned to France where he received a nominal sentence of ten years banishment dating from 1945. This, of course, meant his immediate release. Halls The Youth of Vichy France p.61. Also see H.R.Lottman The People's Anger. Justice and Revenge in Post-Liberation France (London, Hutchinson, 1986) p.179 and p.249
Republican legality.' When de Gaulle arrived in Paris he informed Cardinal Suhard of his intention of reverting to the situation of 1939. Nevertheless, the Church still retained some hope of preserving the advantages it had won under Vichy, particularly the law of 2 November 1941. On 28 February 1945 the ACA demanded that a 'solution de justice' should be found for the schools question. But the hierarchy was soon to be disappointed. The commission under the chairmanship of André Philip, charged with the task of looking into the possibility of a statute for education, failed to reach an agreement. In this situation, the government decided that it had no other option than to abrogate all Vichy's religious and educational measures.

Although the Vichy regime had lasted only four years, the Church had launched a concerted assault on the ideals of 'laïcité'. Initially, at least, this attack paid some dividends. Anxious to please Catholic opinion, the early Vichy Ministers of Education dismantled several of the most hated features of the Republican educational system. Yet Catholic influence at Vichy peaked early. Chevalier's brief tenure as minister revealed the dangers inherent in pursuing an overtly clerical

2. Duquesne Les Catholiques Français p.453
3. ibid p.545
4. This report may be found in: AN 71 AJ 66
policy. Thereafter Carcopino moderated the actions of his predecessors, whereas the Church slowly began to distance itself from Vichy. The arrival of Bonnard in 1942 marked the return to a hardened laicism and the abandonment of any constructive reform; yet still Church leaders continued to press for concessions. As a result, the hierarchy succeeded only in compromising the Church further with an increasingly discredited regime.
Chapter 3

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Part Two

CURRICULUM

In 1944 the Council was quick to point out the growing importance of religious education in the curriculum. This was emphasised by the fact that since 1911 the Catechism of the Roman Catholic Church had been used in all schools. Catholic education had changed little since Pius IX had declared in his Syllabus of Errors, in 1864, that schools were to be established primarily with a view to giving people religious education. In 1901, in his encyclical Aeterni Patris, Pius X had reaffirmed this belief, that education 'religiosa should be the foundation and crowning of all teaching'.

In 1940 the Church was quick to blame military defeat on the religious ignorance of French youth. Above all, it blamed this lack of knowledge on the abandonment of religious instruction administered through the catechism. This was considered by far the most important of all subjects. Catholic doctrine had changed little since Pius IX had declared in his Syllabus of 1864, 'the schools for the masses are established principally with a view to giving people religious education.'¹ In 1929, in his encyclical Divini Illius Magistri, Pius XI had reasserted this belief when he proclaimed, 'religion shall be the foundation and crown of all teaching.'² More recently still, Mgr Jorcin, the bishop of Digne, had remarked, 'Dans le catéchisme se trouve résumé en des formules courtes, claires, substantielles, tout l'ensemble de la religion, tout ce que l'homme a besoin de savoir pour remplir ici-bas sa tâche de chrétien et marcher dans la voie du ciel.'³ Without this guidance, he added, morality itself would crumble.

³ Mgr. Jorcin, bishop of Digne, 'La Nécessité de l'Instruction Religieuse', in OR de Digne 20 février 1941, no.4, p.47
Given the enormous doctrinal importance the Church attached to the teaching of the catechism, it is not surprising that most criticism for its neglect fell on the 'neutralité' of the 'école publique'. What religious education that was given there, in accordance with the law of 28 March 1882, on Thursday afternoons, off school premises and with parental permission, was considered painfully inadequate. One catechism lesson a week was seen as insufficient to provide the child with a true Christian foundation. Before the war, Mgr Marmottin, later to become archbishop of Reims, remarked, 'Quelle science religieuse lui aurez-vous donnée en de brèves et rares leçons de catéchisme? Quelles convictions aurez-vous établies en son intelligence distraite et ailleurs accaparée?'' Nor were the notoriously ambiguous 'devoirs envers Dieu' considered a satisfactory substitute. These had been inserted into the ethics syllabus of State primary schools in 1887. Their intention had been for the 'instituteur' not to teach the existence of God, but respect for His person.² As such, they were thought by ultra-secularists to represent a chink in the strict 'neutralité' of the State school, but were still, in the eyes of the Church, unsatisfactory. They were not an adequate substitute for fully-fledged religious instruction administered by a priest. In any case, as we shall see, teachers had largely given up

1. Mgr Marmottin Figures Françaises (Paris et Tournai, Casterman, 1942) p.173
2. AN 2 AG 609 CM 25 A, 'Programmes de 1887'. Cf M.Ozouf L'Ecole, l'Eglise et la République, 1871-1914 (Paris, Armand Colin, 1963) p.113
teaching the 'devoirs' by the start of the war.

By vanquishing God from the classrooms and lessons of the 'école publique', the Church believed that France had relinquished many of its traditional and redeeming values. Of these, it was probably a feeling of 'la patrie' that an absence of religion had done most to harm. As La Croix de la Haute Savoie remarked in 1942, 'La vigilance à ce sujet n'est-t-elle pas, d'ailleurs, une forme, une meilleure forme du patriotisme..?" Consequently, the Church had been alarmed by the lack of religious knowledge of French soldiers on the front line. In July 1940 La Croix wrote, 'Les prêtres-soldats, les animateurs de nos oeuvres qui sont aux armées, ont constaté toute l'ampleur de ce mal qui s'appelle l'ignorance religieuse.'? Later in June 1941, a report undertaken by La Semaine Religieuse de Marseille, based on the testimonies of sixty priests from the Bouches-du-Rhône mobilized in 1940, commented on the near-total ignorance of God on the part of the French troops they encountered. Such ignorance, the report concluded, had killed a spirit of sacrifice and led to an unbridled materialism.

Even if the neglect of religious instruction had not altogether destroyed patriotic sentiment, it was still considered to have

1. La Croix de la Haute Savoie 4 octobre 1942
2. La Croix 9 juillet 1940
3. Details of this report may be found in SR du Puy-en-Velay 22 août 1941, no.46, pp.487-488; 3 octobre 1941, no.1, pp.9-10; 17 octobre 1941, no.3, pp.28-29
undermined many of the resources that could have made France strong. In December 1941, a survey was commissioned by the Centre Nationale de Coordination et d'Action des Mouvements Familiaux into the causes of 'dénatalité' which Daniel Halévy had identified as an underlying reason behind the defeat. Among the many suggestions offered for the lack of children were included 'les enfants coûtent trop cher'; 'abandon des campagnes'; 'les jeunes coquettes redoutent de perdre leur ligne'; and 'les jeunes engagés préfèrent aller au cinéma ou faire de l'auto'. Significantly, of the one million or thereabouts who answered the questionnaire, nearly half, the overwhelming majority, replied, 'l'insuffisance ou l'absence de religion.'

The question arises, however, how far the Church was to include itself, its schools and its own members in this neglect of religious instruction. On this not everyone was agreed. The Church was far more discriminatory in its appreciation of its own educational system than it was in its assessment of the State's. The hierarchy was quick to pay tribute to the youth movements and clergy of Action Catholique which had done so much to further religious instruction before the war. But, in turn, these organisations were not so generous in their estimation of the efforts of their fellow Catholics: and, more often than not, it was

1. Numerous examples of this questionnaire may be found in the Catholic press. For example, La Croix 1 décembre 1941; La Croix du Dimanche 14 décembre 1941; and La Croix de l'Aveyron 21 décembre 1941.

2. Le Nouvelliste 30 mars 1942
the associations of Action Catholique, and those clergy most concerned
with the evangelical mission of the Church, who were most ready to
acknowledge and highlight the Church's own shortcomings. While they
wholeheartedly admitted that the law of 1882 had made the administering
of the catechism extremely difficult, they still maintained that the
Church had a duty to take the catechism to those Frenchmen, baptised
Catholics, being educated in the State school. After all, they were the
majority of the population. It was thus necessary to make the best of
appalling conditions. But to several members of Action Catholique, it
was considered that many Catholic parents and members of the lower
clergy had not gone to sufficient trouble to make certain that all
children received the catechism. The Loi Ferry had been all too
convenient a scapegoat for avoiding their responsibilities. In this
respect Mgr Saliège declared in 1942, 'dans cette ignorance religieuse,
nous avons tous les responsabilités, la famille qui néglige ou qui
ignore les notions fondamentales de l'éducation morale et religieuse,
les prêtres qui ne sont pas assez exigeants pour l'assiduité des enfants
au catéchisme, qui acceptent, pour éviter des ennuis, des accommodements
regrettables."

It is difficult to say with any precision to what extent these
criticisms were accepted by the clergy. It may be that in the mood of
'mea culpa' of summer 1940 some priests were prepared to acknowledge

1. Mgr Saliège quoted in La Croix de la Haute Savoie 4 octobre 1942
their failings, whereas others might have taken positive exception. Where there was a greater degree of consensus among the clergy was in their attitude towards their congregations. In spite of the law of 1882 and the problems it had created, the Church could not deny that it had still managed to teach the catechism to a sizeable proportion of the population, either in its own schools, or on Thursday afternoons in the 'école publique'. Yet in 1940 it seemed as though many Catholics, both young and old, had forgotten the very values they had been taught to hold so dear. Again Mgr Saliège was one of the most forthright in his criticisms. In September 1940 he announced, 'La preuve est faite. L'ignorance religieuse est très étendue. Le catéchisme n'a pas été appris ou a été oublié.' Nevertheless, the Church was still to draw important distinctions. Not all the laity were included in such admonishments. Rather it was a particular section of the laity - sadly recognised to be the majority - that section of half-hearted lapsed Catholics who only went to Church on holidays or Feast Days to listen to the music, if indeed they went at all. Their Catholicism was an empty Catholicism, devoid of meaning, a 'catholicisme de cérémonie, peu gênant, et qui n'exige aucun acte de foi.'

Thereby, in the summer of 1940, the Church believed that it faced a task of rechristianisation on two fronts. Not only was it essential to

1. Mgr Saliège quoted in La Croix 4 septembre 1940
2. Mgr Saliège quoted in La Croix de la Haute Savoie 4 octobre 1942
re-establish Christianity in State schools, it was also imperative to fortify catechismal teaching in their own. Only by these means would religious ignorance be conquered and France put back on her feet. In August 1940, Mgr Rastouil, bishop of Limoges, declared, 'La France ne pourra se relever que par une meilleure éducation de sa jeunesse et spécialement par la formation morale et religieuse donnée par la famille et l'école.' The bishop of Mende, Mgr Auvity, echoed these remarks, 'Ce serait la pire des illusions de croire qu'on arrivera à refaire l'âme française sans le secours de Dieu et en dehors de Lui.' This faith in the redemptive power of religious education would never falter in the course of the war. Towards the close of 1942, La Croix de la Haute Savoie enquired what better way was there of ensuring the recovery of France than the teaching of the catechism.

In recapturing France for the faith through religious instruction, the Church hierarchy fervently believed it was their own schools that should take the lead and set the example. While the hierarchy would call for the re-establishment of some kind of religious instruction in the 'école publique', they realised that it was in their own schools that the most immediate progress could be made. Mgr Rastouil declared, 'Nos écoles chrétiennes ont un rôle de tout premier plan à remplir.'

1. Mgr Rastouil quoted in La Croix 14 août 1940
2. Mgr Auvity quoted in La Croix 4 septembre 1940
3. La Croix de la Haute Savoie 4 octobre 1942
4. Mgr Rastouil quoted in La Croix 14 août 1940
early as 9 July 1940 La Croix could proudly report that action to extend catechismal teaching was being undertaken by the bishops of Évreux, Dijon and Rouen.¹ La Croix remarked, 'cet ensemble de signes est l'indice certain que l'enseignement du catéchisme aux enfants et leur formation chrétienne par le catéchisme, vont aller en se développant dans les jours qui viennent.' There was an element of prophecy in these words. From the start of 1941 onwards, a number of dioceses began to devote greater attention to a child's religious upbringing. A common move was for bishops to stipulate that no-one could take their 'communion solennelle' until the age of eleven instead of ten as in previous years. This way, it was hoped, all children would be guaranteed a thorough grounding in the Catholic faith. For Mgr Couderc, bishop of Viviers, it was a positive move in the 'relèvement' of France.²

Alongside these moves, efforts were made to improve the content of catechismal teaching itself. In part, this was a process already under way. Before the war, a number of attempts had been made by Action Catholique to make the catechism less didactic in tone and more accessible especially to young children.³ A good example is Mon Joli Petit catéchisme, produced in 1936 by Mgr Quinet,

1. La Croix 9 juillet 1940
2. SR de Viviers 22 septembre 1942, no.39, p.316
3. Dansette Destin du Catholicisme Français p.446
inspector of religious education at Paris. Intended for six to eight
year olds this made little demands on a child's memory and was brightly
illustrated throughout. But pedagogical improvements before the war
should not be exaggerated. A scathing report produced by an anonymous
cleric in the course of the Occupation remarked, 'Nos catéchismes sont
insuffisants et inopérants.' Many areas, including Paris, it continued,
were still using catechisms dating back to the middle of the nineteenth
century. While these had been relevant at a time when France was
relatively Christian, they were totally unsuited to the present state of
religious ignorance. Greater thought, it concluded, must go into the
future content of catechismal teaching.

These recommendations did not go unheeded. Despite the austerity of
wartime a concerted effort was made to update catechisms ensuring that
they were more suited to the age and educational abilities of the child.
Typical among these was Premier Pas Vers Jésus published in 1942, and
adopted by several dioceses in the unoccupied zone. Like that produced

1. Mgr Quinet, Mon Joli Petit Catéchisme. Première Initiation
Chrétienne des Petits de 6 à 8 Ans par la Méthode Evangélique
l'enseignement civique et religieux durant l'entre-deux guerres:
le manuel de morale de Bourceau et Fabry (édition 1937); le manuel
d'initiation chrétienne du Chanoine Masure (1932)', in Actes Lille
pp.417-421

2. AN 2 AG 492 CC72 B, 'Simples notes à titre de la rechristianisation
de pays' (nd)

3. Premier Pas Vers Jésus (Bourgues, Editions André Tardy, 1942)
by Quinet this was meant for young children between the ages of six to nine. While it retained the conventional question and answer approach, it involved few demands on a child's memory and contained numerous colourful illustrations. Gone were the fine print and lengthy passages to recite that had been so characteristic of nineteenth-century catechisms. This approach won particular support in the diocese of Montpellier where the use of Premier Pas Vers Jésus was made compulsory in all parishes and Church schools. ¹ Likewise, La Semaine Religieuse de Limoges praised the work as an excellent grounding in the Catholic faith. ²

The introduction of new catechisms also prompted the Church to improve methods of catechetical teaching. In 1940 most priests still depended on an oral question and answer technique which usually took place at the very start or very end of the schoolday. Rarely would the child be required to comment on the text. Rather the intention was less to awaken a love of God within the student than to prepare him or her for their first communion which, it was believed, would have a decisive influence on their lives. ³ But in future it was hoped that religious instruction would be made more relevant to the child's everyday environment, and thus provide a thorough Christian preparation for later

1. SR de Montpellier 27 février 1943, no.9, p.101
2. SR de Limoges 26 novembre 1943, no. 43, pp.385-359
life. This was the intention of Mgr Rastouil who, in December 1941, established a Centre de Documentation et d'Action Sacerdotales, Catéchistiques et Liturgiques at Limoges. Among its many aims was to pioneer new pedagogical techniques for priests and catechists which would relate to the age, ability and social background of the child. Later in 1942 many other bishops followed Rastouil’s example when, under the encouragement of the ACA, they set up a Direction de l'Enseignement Religieux in their diocese to oversee the quality of catechismal teaching.

It is difficult, however, to assess what impact these diverse initiatives were to have. Wartime was not the best environment in which to launch new textbooks and pedagogical techniques. Several areas remained unaffected. By late 1944, for example, La Semaine Religieuse d'Avignon was urging its priests to use a blackboard to illustrate their lessons rather than expecting their pupils to recite things off by heart. Much still depended on the initiative of the local bishop or an individual priest. Consequently, it was not until 1957 that two thirds of all dioceses possessed a Direction de l'Enseignement Religieux. Even when the Church attempted to provide some overall co-ordination to the

1. SR de Limoges 9 janvier 1942, no. 2, gives a good introduction to the aims of the Centre
2. SR de Lyon 29 octobre 1943, no. 49, p.330
3. SR d'Avignon 10/17 décembre 1944, nos. 48-49, p.189
4. Dansette Destin du Catholicisme Français p.448
many diverse movements for catechismal reform, through the creation of a
Commission Nationale de Catéchisme, it was not until after the war that
its findings began to bear fruit.

The Commission Nationale de Catéchisme was established by the ACA
meeting at Paris on 24 July 1941. Attached to Action Catholique, this
comprised several leading theologians presided over by Mgr Petit de
Julleville, archbishop of Rouen. Their job was to consider ways by which
the catechism could be made clearer and more attractive to infants,
children preparing for their first communion, students in State schools,
adults awaiting baptism and candidates for the Church’s own exams in
religious knowledge. Once again we may see a concern for adapting
religious education to the age and social background of a student. But
the Commission discovered its endeavours continually hampered by the
circumstances of the war. An enquiry begun in November 1941 into the
general state of catechismal teaching in France had to be confined to
the occupied zone as the Commission itself was based in Paris. It was
not until after 1945 that it could put its findings to use in an overall
revision of the national catechism.

It appears, then, that many of the Church’s attempts to strengthen
catechismal teaching within its own schools were not to have any
sizeable impact until after the war. But this should not demean the

1. *La Vie Catholique* pp. 63-64
2. *SR de Nîmes* 22 août 1943, no. 34, p. 207
Church's achievements. Rather the period 1940-1944 was one of transition. It had two significant repercussions. Firstly, the shock of the defeat provided a tremendous fillip to those Catholics who had long since been campaigning to make the catechism more suited to the needs and social environment of the child. Secondly, the multitude of local initiatives demonstrated the real need for a national body to co-ordinate and direct activities. Thus the Commission Nationale de Catéchisme would act as a forerunner to a Centre Nationale and a Commission Episcopale du Catéchisme, set up in 1947 and 1951 respectively. Together, these bodies would be influential in achieving further liaison between dioceses and in establishing greater competence in catechismal teaching with the introduction of a 'diplôme national' and 'licence d'enseignement religieux' for catechists.

Meanwhile, in 1940, the more immediate concern of many Catholics was not so much with developments within their own educational system than with the re-establishment of Christianity within the lessons of the "école publique". Surely it was here, they argued, that there had been the greatest neglect. As we have already seen, the fortification of religious education in the State school was considered just as important as it was in the Church school. Moreover, such a demand carried the Pope's own blessing. Earlier in January 1940, Pius XII had instructed Cardinal Verdier to make representations to the Daladier government for

1. Dansette Destin du Catholicisme Français p.448
the re-introduction of religious instruction within the curriculum of State education.' Although some of the hierarchy doubted the wisdom of such a policy, fearing an anticlerical backlash, it comes as little surprise that this request figured highly in the proposals made to Pétain by the French Cardinals in the summer of 1940.

There can be little doubt that this suggestion was received favourably by Pétain. Shortly afterwards the Marshal proclaimed that the French school would no longer lay claim to 'neutralité' but teach respect for those religious beliefs which France had professed since her origins as a nation. Comments like these could only give rise to tremendous hope in Catholic circles. Later in August 1941, La Croix de la Haute Savoie was able to give further evidence, albeit of a hearsay nature, of Pétain's commitment to religious education. This consisted of a transcript of a conversation between the Marshal and a 'curé' at Montauban. Bemoaning the fact that adults no longer went regularly to mass (he could have included himself in this criticism), the Marshal went on to say that all would still be saved as long as children

1. Please see p.33
4. La Croix de la Haute Savoie 31 août 1941
continued to frequent Church and accomplish their religious duties.

Moreover, the Church could have high expectations of the early Vichy cabinets, which were overwhelmingly Catholic in complexion. Had not General Weygand written in 1937 that the principle of 'neutralité' was 'un grand malheur'. To have removed religion from schools, he had argued, was to have deprived France of its discipline and charity. More recently still, in July 1940, Weygand had proclaimed, 'La France a mérité sa défaite; elle a été battue parce que ses gouvernements depuis un demi-siècle ont chassé Dieu de l'école.' Yet other Vichy Ministers had their reservations, no more so than the first three Ministers of Education, Rivaud, Mireaux and Ripert. While they were undoubtedly sympathetic to Church demands, they were worried by the potentially divisive effects of religious education in State schools. They realised that to re-instate the catechism within the 'programmes scolaires' also meant allowing the priest to re-enter the 'école publique'. This, even in the exceptionally pro-Catholic atmosphere of 1940, was still regarded as a radical measure. Their concern was less with the evangelical mission of the Church than with the establishment and preservation of national harmony. Thus, while the teaching of the catechism in the State school remained an attractive idea in theory, they thought it too fraught with difficulties to be put into practice. As they were to witness, even the relatively minor issue of the return of the crucifix

1. Weygand *Comment Élever Nos Fils?* p.6
2. Duquesne *Les Catholiques Français* p.26
into State schools was enough to spark off divisions and quarrels not seen in many parts of France since the turn of the century.

As with so much of the Republican secularist legislation, the laws governing the hanging of the crucifix in State schools were extremely complex and much debated. Although the Loi Ferry of 1882, establishing the official 'neutralité' of the State system, had discouraged the practice it was not until the law of 9 December 1905 that the crucifix was officially banned. Article 28 of this law had stipulated, 'il est interdit, à l'avenir, d'élèver aucune signe ou emblème religieux sur les monuments publics ou en quelque emplacement public que ce soit.' This, however, had not stopped the practice and in many areas it continued unabated. In 1940 the custom was once more revived in the general fervour of religious revival. As La Semaine Religieuse de Valence put it, this was an important step in the Christian formation of the young. Often the crucifix was re-instated in the school or town hall by the mayor at a village gathering in a symbolic gesture of penance for the sins of the Third Republic. Typical of these ceremonies were those held at three villages in Besançon in 1941.

1. SR de Clermont 8 novembre 1941, no. 45, p.458
2. Article 28 of the Law of 9 December 1905 quoted in SR de Valence 18 mars 1944, no. 11, p.75
3. ibid
4. AN 72 AJ 1883, Note entitled 'Le Christ est remis dans les mairies et les écoles de trois villages comtois', 1941
large procession to the steps of the 'mairie', denounced the former influence of freemasonry in education and committed their schools to the teachings of Christ.

Such ceremonies, however, gave offence in some areas and prefects felt compelled to act. In February 1941, despite local protests, the prefect of the Meuse strictly enforced past Republican legislation. Amid this uncertainty the government also felt obliged to intervene. By a circular of 15 April 1941, Darlan stated that the erection of religious symbols in public places was contrary to the principle of 'neutralité'. In the interests of mutual tolerance and solidarity, he continued, the custom should be avoided. This, while welcomed by L'Oeuvre of 13 April 1941, provoked a Catholic outburst led by Canon Polimann, former deputy of the Meuse. In two letters to Pétain, of 13 May 1941 and 17 June 1941, he pointed out past legal inconsistencies and argued that whenever it did not give offence the crucifix should be allowed. Under this pressure Darlan was forced to back down. In a second circular of 18 July 1941, he claimed that he had been misunderstood in

1. AN 2 AG 609 CM25 A, Letter of the Prefect of the Meuse to the mayors of the department, 28 March 1941
2. AN F17 13341, Circular from Darlan to the Prefects, 15 April 1941
3. Extract from L'Oeuvre 13 avril 1942, contained in AN 72 AJ 1863
4. AN 2 AG 459 CC34 B, Letter of Polimann to Pétain, 13 May 1941
5. AN 2 AG 609 CM25 A, Letter of Polimann to Pétain, 17 June 1941
Rather than wishing to ban the practice, he maintained, it should be permitted in those areas where there was general consent. In turn, this face-saving device was enthusiastically welcomed by Catholics. By July 1942, the prefect of the Aisne could report that the crucifix was widespread in his department and had caused no disturbances. Likewise, in the diocese of Arras over half the State schools had erected a religious emblem by 1944. In the department of the Orne the custom was so popular that Georges Rouleaux-Dugage, the former deputy, proposed that it be made compulsory. Yet elsewhere problems continued, particularly in the departments of the Eure and Meuse. In October 1942 a projected ceremony for the return of the crucifix at one school in the Meuse had to be cancelled because the mayor did not believe that he could obtain unanimous support from the town council, although the local ‘institutrice’ was a Christian and supported the move. Incidents like this continued throughout the Occupation and called out for a clear ruling. Yet characteristically none was forthcoming from Bonnard.

1. AN F17 13341, Circular of Darlan to the Prefects, 18 July 1941
2. AN F17 13341, Report of the Prefect of Aisne, 3 July 1942
3. SR de Valence 18 mars 1944, no. 11, p.76
4. Extract from the Publicateur de L'Orne 21 septembre 1941, contained in AN 72 AJ 1863
5. AN 2 AG 492 CC73 B, Letter from B... de B..., mayor of Menil (Meuse) to Pétain, 9 October 1942
Given the sensitivity religious matters still held in the 'école publique', demonstrated by the relatively trivial matter of the return of the crucifix, it would require the zeal and moral self-righteousness of Chevalier to attempt to overturn sixty years of Republican history by reintroducing the catechism itself. As we have already commented in Chapter Two, Chevalier was fired with a deep spiritual ardour which bordered on fanaticism. He was, therefore, a vigorous supporter of the Church's crusade to reconquer France through religion. To help achieve this reconquest, he considered that, once inside the Ministry of Education, it was his principal duty to do everything to facilitate the reintroduction of religious instruction in State schools, believing more fervently than most that its expulsion had been the primary cause of France's defeat. As a result, Chevalier rejected outright the cautious approach favoured by Rivaud, Mireaux and Ripert. So ardently convinced of the rightness of his motives, he paid far less heed to the possible social consequences of his actions.

Both this desire for speed and this disregard for the repercussions were clearly seen in the first steps Chevalier took to re-establish Christianity within the 'école publique' and the manner in which he proceeded. While still only secretary general for public education, on 23 November 1940, Chevalier took it upon himself,' knowing that Ripert

1. In an interview with Agence Havas, Chevalier claimed the 'pleine approbation' of Ripert. Cf. SR du Puy-en-Velay, 13 décembre 1940, no.11, p.117
would object if informed beforehand, to issue an 'arrêté' re-instating
the 'devoirs envers Dieu' within the ethics syllabus of State primary
schools.

Ever since their introduction in an 'arrêté' of 17 January 1887, the
'devoirs' had been the subject of lively controversy, being one of the
few exceptions in the strict 'neutralité' of the State school. Though
the instructions for the 'devoirs' had not specified that teachers
should prove God's existence, they had nevertheless stipulated that
children should be taught not to take God's name lightly and to obey the
laws of God as revealed by reason and conscience.' This in turn had
failed to satisfy both Catholics and Republicans alike. For the ultra­
secularists, in particular, the 'devoirs' had gone too far, and they
repeatedly called for their removal. In February 1923, Paul Lapie, the
anticlerical director of primary education, deliberately left out the
'devoirs' in a set of abridged programmes for that year.2 Léon Bérard,
the then Catholic Minister of Education, failing to notice the change,
duly signed the decree authorizing Lapie's alterations. It was not until
months later in June that Bérard, realising his error, rectified the
omission by a circular, which re-instated the 'devoirs' within the

1. AN 2 AG 609 CM 25 A, 'Programmes de 1887'
2. Le Temps 7 décembre 1940 provides a good account of the history of
the 'devoirs'.
curriculum of State schools.' Yet, at the same time, the circular failed to amend Lapie's abridged programmes which remained as they were. From June 1923, therefore, the 'devoirs' were a subject only authorized by circular. The resulting confusion, coupled with the secular militancy of the 'instituteurs', ensured that by 1939 teachers had ceased teaching them altogether.

Writing after the war, in 1953, Chevalier claimed that by reintroducing a subject only authorized previously by a circular, he was simply remedying an anomaly. In so doing, all he wished was that teachers spoke 'convenablement' of God. In 1940, in an interview with Agence Havas, he remarked:

L'Etat, en inscrivant dans les programmes les devoirs envers Dieu, en admettant ainsi la notion divine dans son enseignement, ne patronne pas une croyance ou une Eglise au dépens des autres, il ne fait que reconnaître - et c'est au fond son intérêt - l'une des acquisitons permanentes de la raison, celle que la pensée humaine a de tout temps posée comme la seule base possible de la morale.

1. *La Croix*, 20/21 avril 1941, went to great lengths to establish that Bérard was unaware of Lapie's changes. What is not known, however, is whether or not Bérard played any role in the reintroduction of the 'devoirs' in November 1940. As the French Ambassador to the Vatican, Bérard was frequently a visitor at Vichy and was a friend of Chevalier's. Yet Bérard himself gives no evidence of his involvement. In a letter of 3 April 1941 to André Lefas, a member of the Commission Sénatoriale de l'Enseignement, Bérard carefully avoided being dragged into the controversy that Chevalier had sparked off. Bérard wrote, 'Au poste où je suis et dans les circonstances présentes, je tiens essentiellement à n'ouvrir aucune controverse et à ce que mon nom ne soit mêlé à aucun débat politique.' This letter is contained in AN 2 AG 609 CM25 A.

2. Chevalier 'Témoignage', p.84

3. *La Croix du Dimanche* 15 décembre 1940
Nevertheless, while the 'devoirs' did not favour any one denomination, it was quite clear who they were intended to benefit. They were the initial step in Chevalier's quest to establish religion in the 'école publique', a valuable foundation on which the Church would be able to build.

As could have been anticipated, the 'devoirs' were warmly received in Catholic circles. La Croix and La Croix du Dimanche announced, 'L'Ecole sans Dieu a vécu', a claim echoed by Cardinal Gerlier in a speech of 8 December 1940. For far too long, they claimed, the 'devoirs' had been neglected or forgotten completely, and they quoted at length Chevalier's reasons for their reintroduction. Other Catholics believed that giving children some early notion of God would make the priest's job easier when it came to the catechism. But there were criticisms. Jules Jeanneney noted sarcastically in his diary, 'Enfin on va être vertueux.' But more significant were those criticisms of Esprit, the leading Catholic intellectual journal of the 1930s revived by Emmanuel Mounier at Lyon in November 1940. They are one of the first indications that not all Catholics were pleased with the policy Chevalier was pursuing. As early as July 1940, Mounier and his

1. La Croix 12 décembre 1940, and La Croix du Dimanche 15 décembre 1940
2. SR de Lyon 13 décembre 1940, no.3, p.25
personalist followers had been conspicuous. While condemning the decadence of the old Republic, they were among the tiny minority of Catholics who deliberately refrained from denouncing outright the secular laws on education because they feared the harmful effects such a backlash might have on the fragile unity surrounding Pétain. Consequently, they were troubled by the 'devoirs' which, they believed, would provoke anticlericalism on the part of the State teachers forced to teach a subject for which they had no empathy. Moreover, they feared Chevalier was in danger of establishing an official philosophy of God which was just as dangerous as the official atheism of the Third Republic. Nor were they convinced by the theological position Chevalier had adopted, that a belief in God depended on 'Reason'. To which God did this 'Reason' relate to? Was it to the God of Abraham, Isaac and Christ or to that of Voltaire and the Vicaire Savoyard? But to staunchly traditionalist Catholics, especially among the lower clergy, the 'devoirs' did not go far enough; they were not the catechism. Yet, for them, the wait would not be long. At the beginning of 1941, Chevalier, now as Minister of Education, took the initiative and, at long last, succeeded in reinstating religious instruction within the 'école publique'.

Once again, it appears that Chevalier had to resort to the rather

1. 'Dieu À l'Ecole', in Esprit février 1941, no.97; mars 1941, no.98; and avril 1941, no.99.
2. Pierre Ganne writing in Esprit février 1941, no.97, p.226
unchristian practices of deception and subterfuge in order to implement the measure, providing eloquent testimony to the persistent doubts entertained by Vichy about the advisability of the catechism. Carcopino recalls that, although the law had been intended (and was eventually dated for the 6 January 1941) Chevalier had to wait until the changeover of power between Flandin and Darlan in mid-February that year before he was able to take the necessary steps to realise his aim.

Originally Chevalier, no doubt taking full advantage of the opportunities offered by the dismissal of Laval the previous December, had proposed the measure to Flandin, the new deputy prime minister, at the start of the year. But Flandin, fearing that such a law would stir up the anticlerical squabbles of yesteryear, fiercely opposed the move and forbade Chevalier to issue the applicatory 'arrêté' for the law. Dismayed, but not defeated, Chevalier waited for his next chance, soon to arise with Flandin's sudden resignation on 13 February 1941. Only too aware that Darlan, Flandin's successor, would violently oppose the reintroduction of the catechism, both as an anticlerical and as a non-Catholic, Chevalier saw the need for speedy action, and published the necessary authorization before Darlan settled into office, dating the law back to 6 January 1941 when it had originally been planned.

The law stipulated that religious education was to be incorporated

1. Carcopino Souvenirs de Sept Ans p.278 et seq
into the curriculum of the State school, albeit as an optional subject.¹
No longer was Thursday afternoon, as the Loi Ferry had decreed, to be reserved for the teaching of the catechism. Instead one and a half hours a week could be put aside, if so desired. Chevalier himself described this move as a 'simple mesure d'humanité' arguing that, in future, Thursdays would be a proper holiday for children.² The actual teaching of the catechism would still be confined to the Church or annexed buildings, but, in 'circonstances exceptionnelles', with the agreement of both the mayor and the Academy Inspector, religious instruction could be given on the school premises themselves. By allowing the priest to re-enter the 'école publique' Chevalier was bound to give offence to secularists and he defended himself, both at the time and after the war, with the argument that by 'circonstances exceptionnelles' he was thinking of those communes where the journey between church and school was hazardous in the winter.³

Predictably, Catholic reaction was widely enthusiastic. For those concerned with the evangelical mission of the Church the new law was regarded as an invaluable aid in the reconquest of France. La Croix of

1. Law of 6 January 1941 in JO 26 février 1941
2. Circular to prefects and rectors of 27 January 1941 quoted in Chevalier 'Témoignage', p.85
3. Chevalier 'Témoignage', p.85
13 March 1941 saw it as a measure of reparation and justice, whereas La Semaine Catholique de Saint-Flour remarked that it was 'une adaptation aux exigences actuelles de la vie scolaire', carried out in 'un esprit humanitaire'. But these attitudes were not surprising. What are again of greater interest are the objections raised by certain Catholics. These are significant in that they represent part of a slow but steadily emerging picture of diversity developing within the Church that had not been so readily apparent in 1940. As with the 'devoirs', within this matter too intellectuals, represented by Esprit, were worried about the unity of the nation. But of greater significance still are those doubts being expressed by some members of the hierarchy, in particular Cardinals Suhard and Baudrillart at Paris. While grateful for the measure, they too had their reservations.

This attitude on the part of Suhard and Baudrillart is intriguing and requires some explanation. After all it had been the Cardinals who had called loudest for the return of the catechism. Was not Chevalier's legislation the fulfillment of this aim? Suhard especially might have been expected to welcome the law. He had been one of the most concerned of the hierarchy for the spiritual health of the nation, reputedly having spent three sleepless nights in the course of the

1. La Croix 13 mars 1941
2. SC de St-Flour 13 mars 1941, no.11, p.95
Occupation after reading a report by two priests on the extent of the déchristianisation of France. What were, then, Baudrillart's and Suhard's reservations? What made them reconsider their position?

The answer seems to lie principally in the financial difficulties facing Catholic schools. As will be seen in Chapter Eight, the shortages of the war threatened the very survival of Catholic education. By reintroducing the catechism within the 'école publique', thought Suhard and Baudrillart, Chevalier might well be doing the Church a big favour, yet, at the same time, he was diverting people's attention away from what was rapidly becoming the most urgent crisis facing Catholic schools since the secular legislation of the 1880s. Furthermore, both Cardinals may well have been worried by the reactions that Chevalier had provoked. There had not been the degree of unity they had hoped for. Here, however, Suhard and Baudrillart's seems to have been very different. The evidence remains impressionistic. Suhard, renowned for his perceptive awareness of the sentiments within the lower clergy, appeared troubled by the anxieties being raised by individual priests worried at the prospect of entering the State school. Perhaps Chevalier had been a little hasty. But for Baudrillart, the most reactionary of the bishops, the problem of disharmony seems to have lain not so much with the

1. Whelan Cassidy writing in the preface to E. Suhard The Church Today p.viii. It seems likely that this was the report produced by Yvan Daniel and Henri Godin. See Y. Daniel and H. Godin La France. Pays de Mission (Paris, Les Editions du Cerf, 1943)
clergy as with his collaborationist friends at Paris with whom he had deep ties and to whom he felt strong loyalties.

Certainly the collaborationist press had been outraged by Chevalier's legislation. Papers such as L'Effort, Le Cri du Peuple and L'Oeuvre all saw the very survival of secular education at stake. L'Oeuvre of 9 January 1941 accused Chevalier of the black design of 'faire rentrer l'Université dans le giron de l'Eglise.' The paper was also troubled by the effects Chevalier's legislation was having on the Germans who were known to be deeply hostile. Indeed, when Darlan travelled to Paris on 26 February 1941 to meet the German Ambassador, Abetz spent much of the interview chastising Chevalier, first for his legislation on religious education and, second, for having sent a telegramme of sympathy to Bergson's widow on the occasion of the Jewish philosopher's death.

Yet it would be going too far to suggest that Vichy's subsequent change of policy on the catechism and Chevalier's move to the less sensitive post of Minister of Health and the Family at the end of February 1941 can be attributed solely to German pressure. Against this we must also place the discontent felt by many of Chevalier's cabinet colleagues and highly-placed civil servants in the

1. L'Oeuvre 9 janvier 1941 cited in Chevalier 'Témoignage', p.83
2. AN AJ 40 555, Extract from Pariser Zeitung 30 January 1941
Education Ministry. Both du Moulin de Labarthète and Paul Auphan expressed the view that Chevalier was moving too fast. They were troubled by the protests Chevalier had sparked off and had become a little tired of the tactics Chevalier employed to implement his schemes. Ultimately, it was this disquiet on the part of the Vichy government itself, rather than German protests, that tipped the scales against Chevalier. That Vichy was still very much in charge of policy may be seen in the appointment of Carcopino as Chevalier's successor in preference to Bonnard, the German candidate.

As a Catholic Carcopino had sympathised with the aims of Chevalier. But as a man of more moderate beliefs, who genuinely wanted to accommodate all opinions, he considered Chevalier had been too impetuous and over-zealous in his approach to the question of religious education. He expanded his reasoning further at a meeting of the Council of Ministers held at the Hôtel du Parc at Vichy on 7 March 1941. Here Carcopino argued that in a France part-occupied the maintenance of morale was the overriding duty of government, and that it should avoid throwing into the communes the firebrand of discord. By allowing the priest to enter the State school Vichy might be doing just that by giving rise to fears that the 'école publique' was fast becoming the

1. Du Moulin de Labarthète Le Temps des Illusions p. 302
2. Auphan Histoire Elementaire p. 118
3. Carcopino Souvenirs de Sept Ans p. 302
'école confessionnelle'. Carcopino shuddered at the consequences of upsetting the principle of 'neutralité', asking sardonically whether the priest would be welcomed beneath a hail of flowers. And, he added, 'Est-on même sûr qu'il désire y pénétrer et qu'il n'aime pas mieux dans la sincérité de sa foi, initier les enfants à sa religion dans son église et près du tabernacle de son Dieu?'

Of the Ministers present - Pétain, Huntziger, Bouthillier, Caziot, Barthélemy and Darlan - only Barthélemy and Caziot appear to have questioned Carcopino's reasoning. Caziot objected that 'la spiritualisme, avec les promesses de l'au-delà qu'il implique, est le plus énergique stimulant de l'esprit de sacrifice nécessaire à une nation dans les heures critiques.' Nevertheless, with Darlan's support, Carcopino's arguments won the day and three days later, on 10 March 1941, in his first moves as minister he abrogated Chevalier's religious measures.

Henceforth religious instruction was again a voluntary subject, given off school premises. Yet, in an attempt to please all sides, one and a half hours a week would still be allocated for the catechism on

1. Carcopino *Souvenirs de Sept Ans* p.271
2. Duquesne *Les Catholiques Français* p.91
3. Law of 10 March 1941 in *JO* 12 mars 1941
the school timetable. A circular of 7 April 1941 suggested that this could be given at the very start or very end of the day.'

Likewise the 'devoirs envers Dieu' were removed from the school programmes. In future, the 'devoirs' were changed to the more neutral 'devoirs envers... nos semblables (respect des familles, de la patrie, de la pensée autrui et des croyances religieuses.)' The syllabus no longer included a study of God but of Christian values and civilization. Carcopino justified this change on the grounds that the 'instituteur', trained in the secular 'école normale', was not capable of teaching about God. He was not a 'sous-maître' of theology. However, Carcopino did believe that the teacher was equipped to talk about Christian civilisation and values, especially those exemplified by such figures as Joan of Arc and Saint Vincent de Paul. This reflected Carcopino's belief that Christianity was better taught through history. But an ironic consequence was that for the first time in the history of the State school the name of God was totally eliminated. This was because Carcopino had annulled all previous legislation on the 'devoirs'. In turn, the bishop of Nancy declared, 'Jamais même aux heures les plus sombres de la persécution religieuse, le nom de Dieu n'avait été

1. AN F17 13319, Circular of Carcopino to the Prefects, 7 April 1941
2. Carcopino Souvenirs de Sept Ans p.302
This response was characteristic of traditional Catholic reaction, which had been deeply disappointed at the rescinding of Chevalier’s legislation. La Croix of 13 March 1941 openly voiced disapproval, whereas General Castelnau, representing the FNC, wrote personally to Pétain deploring the changes. In a letter of 2 April 1941 he claimed that only through the teaching of God would France be able to achieve a national renovation. Other leading Church figures, however, were more moderate in their response. While they were undoubtedly disappointed, in a desire to avoid awakening sectarianism, they were prepared to give Carcopino qualified approval. Of these, Suhard was the most notable. When Darlan, accompanied by a member of his cabinet, the fervent Catholic de la Monneraye, went to see the Cardinal to explain the reasons behind the changes, Suhard conceded that it was all probably for the best and was prepared to accept that Chevalier had been a little too hasty. At least, Suhard reflected, Catholics could take comfort in the fact that the catechism was now part of the school timetable and had been accorded a greater degree of official recognition. This too appears

1. Duquens Les Catholiques Français p.63
2. La Croix 13 mars 1941
3. AN 2 AG 607 CM21 E, Letter of Castelnau to Pétain, 2 April 1941
4. Dodier A la Recherche de la Paix Scolaire pp.28-29
to have been the attitude of Cardinal Gerlier, although, as a German report commented, he found it harder to hide his disappointment. Gerlier even took up the issue with Pétain at an interview on 22 July 1941, but received no hint of future concessions. Only liberal Catholics, fronted by Mounier, gave unqualified approval to Carcopino's measures believing that a major conflict had been avoided between 'instituteur' and 'curé' in the countryside. As we shall see in Chapter Seven, tensions over the catechism were largely contained.

By as early as the Spring of 1941, then, the chance to re-instate religious instruction within State schools had come and gone. Carcopino was not to waver from the position he had first adopted. Bonnard, his anticlerical successor, offered even less hope to the Church. When the bishop of Autun, Chalon and Mâcon proposed in January 1943 that the government should sanction religious instruction in State technical schools when it was already being provided unofficially by a priest, Bonnard flatly turned down the request. Bonnard's objections were

1. AN AJ 40 556, 'Meldungen aus dem besetzten Frankreich', 3 May 1941
2. AN 2 AG 492 CC72 A, 'Schema d'un entretien du Maréchal Pétain avec le Cardinal Gerlier (pour le 22 juillet 1941)'
3. AN F17 13346, Bishop of Autun, Chalon and Mâcon to Bonnard, 29 January 1943.
twofold. First, he did not want to have to find the additional expenditure to pay the chaplains should the measure be adopted. Second, and more importantly, he did not wish to set a precedent for religious instruction in all State technical schools and other institutions as well.

In any case, after 1941 the Church was less interested in the question of religious instruction. As Suhard had predicted, the funding of Catholic education would become the main question in the schools problem. Although, as we have seen, the catechism might have figured in the ill-fated negotiations for a Concordat, few Catholics continued to find the time and inclination to press for further concessions on the issue. One such wrote to Bonnard on 8 October 1943, claiming Chevalier had possessed 'intelligence et courage' in putting God back into schools. This move, he continued, had been a ray of hope for France. Yet it had not been long before Carcopino and the freemasons had reasserted themselves in the Education Ministry. But few other Catholics made similar demands, maybe in the realisation that they would receive a cold reception by Bonnard.

This diversification of Catholic interests after 1941 was a far cry from the situation in the summer of 1940. Then the Church had apparently stood united in both a sense of sadness and of hope: sadness in that

1. AN F17 13346, 'Note pour M. le Ministre', 3 février 1941
2. AN F17 13349, Letter of M... a lawyer from Mareuil (Dordogne), to Bonnard, 8 October 1943
France had largely abandoned the catechism, the source of her religious beliefs, but hope that the shock of the defeat would put things to rights. Within its own schools there was some justification in this hope. As we have seen, despite the obstacles of wartime, real progress was made in catechismal teaching, establishing important foundations on which the Church was able to build at the end of the Occupation. But the hope to re-introduce the catechism within the State school was misplaced. Even in the unusually pro-clerical atmosphere of Vichy this was an over-ambitious design. It was impossible to turn the clock back and reverse over half a century of State 'neutralité' in one fell swoop. In 1940, only a handful of Catholics had foreseen this. It would not be until the middle of the next year that the rest began to follow suit.
Chapter Four

'LES MANUELS SCOLAIERS'

Although the Church placed an enormous emphasis on the teaching of the catechism, this was not to the exclusion of all other subjects. In the first half of the twentieth century, religious instruction only constituted a small fragment of the school timetable. On average, it has been calculated that in Catholic secondary schools the catechism took up little over one and a half hours a week. While in primary schools the catechism was taught daily, it was only two or three times a week that pupils were required to comment on the text. For the rest, the timetable of Church schools comprised much the same subjects as State ones. In November 1944 these similarities led Chanoine Hamayon to comment to the Commission Philip, investigating the distinctive features of 'enseignement public' and 'enseignement privé', that, apart from the catechism, the types of course taught in both systems varied little. The difference was, he added, that in the Church school all subjects were infused with Christianity and a love of God. They still constituted a form of religious education. Only then would children be able to develop their souls and follow Christian directives. Without such a divine notion, he continued, children would be incapable of attaining a moral sense. Thus, even in the delicate days following the Liberation,

2. ibid
the Church questioned the strict 'neutralité' of the State system.

In 1940, this challenge was far more forthright. Just as the neglect of the catechism was blamed for military disaster, so too was the abandonment of religion generally within schools. This had killed off the values of discipline and sacrifice, ideals that had been so lacking on the battlefield. Yet 'neutralité' was not only condemned for having abandoned religion. Under the nefarious influence of freemasonry and the 'instituteurs', it was widely believed to have become an explicit attack on Catholicism itself. As Cardinal Verdier had written earlier in 1934, 'Proclamer, en effect, que l'école est neutre, c'est dire que dans l'enseignement qu'elle donne elle ignore en fait la Religion Catholique et, en général, toute religion positive.' In March 1941, Mgr Bornet took this charge a step further. 'L'erreur capitale de l'Ecole d'hier', he proclaimed, 'c'est d'avoir cru à l'antichristianisme...' This mistake, he continued, had thrown Frenchmen, 'désunis, amollis, en pleine guerre, en pleine défaite, en pleine misère.'

The Church had numerous examples at hand of how it believed the State school had jettisoned religion. Catholics frequently referred to the 'manuels scolaires' of the old Republic from which all references to God and the Supernatural had been removed. Indeed, they had been saving them up for the past sixty years. For instance, in 1926 Mgr

1. Mgr Verdier La Question Scolaire p.45
2. Mgr Bornet quoted in SR de Lyon, 28 mars 1941, no.18, pp.210-211
Landrieux, bishop of Digne, had published extensive lists of Republican alterations to textbooks. One such was *Grammaire de l'Enfance* by Leclair and Rouzé. This had undergone the following revisions in just four years:

<table>
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<th>1878 edition</th>
<th>1882 edition</th>
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<tr>
<td>p.59 Poésie: la bonté de Dieu</td>
<td>la fleur des ânes, le chardon</td>
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<tr>
<td>p.17 Le catéchisme est un livre</td>
<td>Le fer est un métal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p.19 Notre Dame est un nom propre</td>
<td>La Corse est un nom propre</td>
</tr>
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In 1940, many of these examples were recalled. On 4 August *La Croix* cited what was perhaps the most famous of these. This was the La Fontaine fable where the author had originally written:

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Petit poisson deviendra grand
Pourvu que Dieu prête vie...
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Yet under the influence of 'un esprit sectaire' this had been changed in many 'manuels scolaires' to:

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   (Paris, Editions Spes, 1926) p.135 (Hereafter Mgr Landrieux *La Leçon du Passé*)

2. *La Croix* 4 août 1940
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Later in November 1941, Ecole et Liberté drew its readers attention to a report of Jérôme and Jean Tharaud of the Académie Française, which had analysed the many changes to a widely-used grammar of Larive and Fleury.' This had undergone several editions since the early 1900s in which time all references to religion had disappeared. The example 'Adam et Eve se promènent dans le paradis' had become 'Robert et Jules se promènent dans un jardin potager.' 'L'âme est immortelle' had given way to the less edifying 'L'âne est patient.' 'Industrie' replaced 'Providence' and 'Le curé du village' had been supplanted by 'La fête du village.' 'Il faut rappeler ces choses', Ecole et Liberté concluded, 'pour qu'on n'oublie jamais la profondeur de l'abîme de sottise dans lequel a été prolongée toute une partie de la jeunesse française.'

In making these criticisms, the Church discovered a ready audience at Vichy in 1940 and 1941. As we have already seen in Chapter Three, Pétain and the early Education Ministers were deeply hostile to the concept of 'neutralité'. In September 1940, Rivaud urged that education be given a new morality and rescued from the influence of such 'petits

1. Ecole et Liberté novembre 1941. Mgr Landrieux La Leçon du Passé also comments on the same grammar, p.136
prophètes' as Rousseau, Condorcet, Renan, Comte and Buisson. Moreover, unlike the question of religious education, this was an area in which Vichy was prepared to act. It did not require the zealotry of Chevalier. Rather the restoration of spiritual values in the 'école publique' was seen as a vital part of the National Revolution and, unlike the reintroduction of the catechism, was not considered to threaten the social peace.

The most obvious way of proceeding was, of course, through the revision of textbooks and censorship. Influenced by techniques employed by more openly authoritarian regimes like Germany, which, as we will see, was operating its own separate censorship system in the occupied zone, Vichy was anxious to establish machinery to oversee the type of textbooks used in the State school. Here the attention of both the Pétain government and the Church focussed on the power of the 'instituteurs' who, in the past, had exercised considerable control over the choice of books.

Since a decree of 21 February 1914, teachers had been able to suggest the adoption of new textbooks and the revision of old ones at their 'conférences pédagogiques'. These met on an annual basis and at a cantonal level. Their suggestions were then forwarded to the

1. A. Rivaud 'Vers Une Ecole Nouvelle' in RDM, 1 septembre 1940, pp.5-14 and RDM, 1 octobre 1940, pp.225-238
2. La Croix, 24 août 1940, provides a good guide to this system as does Le Temps, 25 août 1940
'conseils départementaux', which advised on nearly all aspects of education in the department. Again these were largely composed of teachers. In turn, the proposals of the 'conseils départementaux' were made to the Rector before being sent to the Minister of Education at Paris for final approval.

It was the Church's complaint that this system left too much power in the hands of socialist and communist teachers of the SNI who dominated the local committees. As La Croix de la Corrèze remarked in September 1940, the Minister was entirely at the mercy of the teachers' advice, the end result being that the textbooks selected were anticlerical and Republican, poisoning the national soul of France.' The Church, then, rejoiced at a decree of 21 August 1940 aimed at reasserting ministerial authority and breaking the power of the 'instituteurs'. In future, a national commission, whose members were all government appointees would decide on the books in use. Although proposals would still be made by teachers at their 'conférences pédagogiques', any unsuitable titles would be carefully removed by the time the suggestions reached the national commission. At long last, wrote Marcel Gabilly in La Croix of 24 August 1940, 'force de la famille, grandeur de la patrie, noblesse de travail, redeviendront pour l'enfance, des notions primordiales qui porteront rapidement leurs fruits.'

1. La Croix de la Corrèze 1 septembre 1940
2. La Croix 24 août 1940
It was some while, however, before the commission could be established and its recommendations put into force. In the meantime, on 21 August Vichy issued a circular giving the titles of four history books no longer to be used. This was supplemented by a law of 23 October 1940 which cited twenty-five 'manuels scolaires', this time not all history books, judged to be 'subversifs ou contraire à l'enseignement de la morale prévu dans les nouveaux programmes.' But on quite what grounds Vichy reached this particular selection remains unclear. Although some were considered to espouse socialist and anticlerical sentiments, the answer appears to lie principally in that most of these works were printed by SUDEL, the publishing house of the SNI. Once again, it was an example of Vichy's deep hostility towards the Left and Trade Unionism. But, whatever the reasons, the Church warmly welcomed the move. La Croix of 22 February 1941 saw this 'épuration' as a significant step in the fight against sectarianism and internationalism.

The Church continued to endorse Vichy's moves against the 'manuels scolaires' of the State school. By late 1943, the total of censored books had reached over 300. While most tended to be geography, history and 'morale', there were some bizarre choices. Chevalier even banned two arithmetic books by Weber and Gailly. His decision might have been

1. Information Universitaire 21 novembre 1940 and 30 novembre 1940
because the volumes were published by SUDEL or, more sinisterly, because the authors were Jewish. Either way it appears to have made little difference to the Church. Catholic reaction to Chevalier's prohibition, as expressed by La Croix, was widely enthusiastic. Nevertheless in many eyes it had been an outspoken move and a few months later, on 10 June 1941, Carcopino lifted the ban.

For the time being, at least, Church schools were excluded from Vichy's censorship arrangements. Neither the government nor the Church believed Catholic education was at fault for the defeat. Rather it was considered to have promoted the very values that State schools had neglected. Moreover, as with the catechism, while Catholics were prepared to redouble their efforts to promote a national revival and enthusiastically endorsed many of Vichy's schemes to this end, they were unwilling to undertake any radical revision of their own 'manuels scolaires'. In any case, they argued, their schools were already subject to strict supervision. Not only did the Church possess its own rigorous censorship system whereby every volume required a 'nihil obstat' before publication, since 1880 the State had also prohibited the use of any textbook in private education that could be

1. La Croix 22 février 1941

considered hostile to the national interest. But this state of affairs
was not to last. Catholic schools soon discovered themselves subject to
censorship from two bodies: first, from the Germans and, second, from
Vichy itself.

Initially it was only Church schools in the occupied zone that were
affected by German censorship. They were subject to the infamous 'Liste
Otto' drawn up in late September 1940 by the German authorities in
conjunction with the Syndicat National des Editeurs. This comprised a
disparate collection of over a thousand books which were to be withdrawn
from publication. Among them were a small number of titles by the
Catholic publishing houses, Maison de la Bonne Presse and Maison Mame.
By and large, these were history books considered hostile to Germany,
but also included works by Cardinal Baudrillart who, in spite of his
collaborationist stance in 1940, had been deeply hostile to Germany in
the First World War. The list continued to grow, undergoing two further
editions on 8 July 1942 and 10 May 1943. By then, it contained over 1400
titles, again the majority being history books or by Jewish authors.

1. J.Freysinnet-Dominjon Les Manuels d'Histoire de l'Ecole libre

2. Copies of the 'Liste Otto may be found in AN F17 13378. A shortened
version is included in the collection of documents of H.C.Rice
pp.101-106

3. For example, Mgr. Baudrillart Pourquoi la France aime et aide la
Pologne (Flammarion, Paris, nd)
The 'Liste Otto', however, did not preclude the German authorities from taking individual action against textbooks used in Catholic schools. On 18 October 1940, Maison Mame received a list of fifteen titles to be revised or withdrawn from sale. One of these was Chronologie de l'Histoire de France. This contained the following offending passage on the causes of the First World War that required urgent revision:

Les causes de la guerre sont des plus complexes, mais l'ouverture des hostilités est due, en partie du moins, à la volonté de l'Allemagne de soutenir l'Autriche dans ses revendications à la suite de l'assassinat, à Serajevo, de l'Archiduc Ferdinand, Prince héritier d'Autriche, et à celle de la Russie de faire respecter son protectorat traditionnel sur les nations d'origine slave.

Ces dispositions, qui mettaient aux prises des intérêts opposés déclanchèrent automatiquement le jeu des alliances Austro-Allemande et Franco-Russe.

L'invasion de la Belgique par les troupes allemandes provoqua l'intervention armée de l'Angleterre, garante de la neutralité Belge.

But it was not just Catholic history books that were considered in need of rewriting. At the 'rentrée' of October 1941, the Catholic publishing house Editions Ecole et Collège reminded schools that a number of its textbooks on 'morale' were no longer permitted. Certainly the Germans could prove hostile to Christianity. For example, on 30 November 1943

1. AN AJ 40 660, Note entitled 'Schrifttum, 18.10.1940'
2. ibid
3. AN F17 13390, 'Livres Primaires Interdits', October 1941
they prohibited Chanoine Poulet's *Histoire de l'Eglise*. Yet, for the most part, the Germans contented themselves with the prohibition and revision of history books thought to be critical of the Reich, ultimately extending their censorship system over all of France after November 1942.

Not surprisingly, the Church did not take kindly to German censorship and, as in State schools, it appears that many books remained in use. For instance, an enquiry undertaken by the Direction de l'Enseignement Libre at Paris in April 1943 discovered that one school in the sixteenth arrondissement was using a whole range of prohibited works. In its defence the school claimed that not only had this become necessary as a result of material shortages, but because many parents took the view that the books were good enough for them were good enough for their children. Elsewhere too problems prevailed. In May 1943, *La Semaine Religieuse du Puy-en-Velay* published a list of twenty one history books which it suspected might be still in use in the diocese in defiance of German orders. A similar list appeared in Grenoble in September 1943. But, in some places, the Church authorities

1. AN AJ 40 559, 'An Propagandaabteilung Gruppe Schrifttum' 30 November 1943
2. AN F17 13390 'Rapport de la Direction de l'Enseignement Libre du Diocèse de Paris relativement à un manuel interdit par les armées d'occupation' 5 April 1943
4. SR de Grenoble 30 septembre 1943, no.7, p4
refused to be so explicit. *La Semaine Religieuse de Viviers* merely remarked that the use of certain books was banned, and left it up to the school authorities themselves to discover from the Direction Diocésain de l'Enseignement Libre what were not allowed.' In this situation it is easy to see how confusion arose.

More complex still was the system of censorship Vichy exercised over Church schools. This was initiated by the legislation of 2 November 1941 granting subsidies to private elementary education. In the provisions for schools assisted, it was stipulated that they could not 'utiliser les livres or manuels interdits dans l'enseignement public.' It will be recalled that until then, apart from the prohibition of books considered overtly hostile to the national interest, the State had not interfered in the content of Catholic education. Why, then, did Vichy alter this situation? And why was the Church prepared to accept these provisions?

For Vichy's part, the measure was of a 'quid pro quo' nature. If the government was to subsidize private elementary schools, then the State should also have a right to oversee standards within them. Thus the move on textbooks went hand in hand with the other provisions made by the law of 2 November 1941 regarding the powers of the State to inspect the quality of teaching in private schools. Moreover, Vichy argued, if

1. *SR de Viviers* 12 novembre 1943, no.46, p.746
2. Article 3 of Law no.4666 of 2 November 1941, in JO, 9 novembre 1941 p.4851
Catholic pupils were to sit the new school-leaving examination, the Certificat d'Etudes Primaires (CEP), as the November legislation further stipulated, then it was important that there existed a greater uniformity in the types of books used in public and private education. In turn, the Church accepted this reasoning. In any case, by the end of 1941 it was so desperate for subsidies that there was little else it could do. But it took reassurance in that Vichy laid no claims to interfere in the choice of curriculum. In particular, religious education would remain untouched. Nor did the Church believe that it had a great deal to fear from the State. As we have already seen, the majority of the books banned by Vichy were published by SUDEL, hardly a likely supplier of Catholic schools. And, finally, the Church may have even welcomed the move as, in future, it would be represented on the national Commission d'Interdiction de Livres Scolaires, and consequently have a greater say in the choice of books in the 'école publique'.

To a large extent, the strength of these arguments allayed Catholic fears about the freedom of their schools. Nonetheless, the new arrangements for textbook supervision had far reaching implications for private education and, indeed, for Church/State relations. As a government note of 6 November 1941 indicated, Catholic textbooks were already subject to Church censorship. If they were then challenged by the State, this could create a point of friction. Secondly, the note

1. AN 2 AG 496 CC78 A, 'Note sur le projet de Décret relatif à l'usage des livres scolaires' 6 November 1941
questioned whether or not the State was in a competent position to judge the kind of book used in Catholic schools. Catechisms, religious histories and works on moral philosophy were largely beyond the experience of the State authorities. And, thirdly, the note warned of the danger of Vichy over-using its powers of revision especially at a future date when the educational policy of the government was not so favourably disposed towards the Church.

Given these potential difficulties, Vichy rarely chose to intervene and suppress Catholic textbooks. On one of the few occasions it did, this provoked several of the problems outlined above. This was when an 'arrêté' of 24 April 1944 banned the use of Chanoine Rolin's Histoire de l'Eglise en Trente Lécôns published by Editions Ecole et Collège in 1943.' Written by a 'curé-doyen' from the East of France, this work was intended not just for Catholic schools but for 'persévérants' of the 'écoles primaires' and for the 'classes élémentaires' of 'lycées' and 'collèges'. Had the work been aimed solely at Catholic education, then it is possible it would have escaped Vichy's notice. As the work was designed for a much wider audience, its sale was completely prohibited.

The reasons why Vichy acted against Rolin's Histoire de l'Eglise were outlined in an unsigned document probably drawn up in preparation for the 'arrêté' of 24 April 1944 in JO 5 Mai 1944, no.108, p.1232
for the 'arrêté' of 24 April 1944.' This began by stating that pedagogically the work was perfectly sound. The thirty lessons corresponded to the thirty weeks of the school year. The résumé of the important points of each lesson at the end of every chapter was also praised. Rather it was the content the report objected to. 'Nous regrettons vivement', it remarked 'que l'auteur de cette "petite histoire de l'Eglise enseignée à des petits Français" ait adopté parfois le ton de la polémique.' Although the report's authors admitted they did not possess the necessary competence to comment on many of the religious quarrels which took up the best part of the book, they disliked the partisan position Rolin had adopted.

In particular, they objected to the chapter on the Enlightenment, entitled 'La lutte de l'incredulité contre l'Eglise', and the attitude expressed towards the 'école publique'. The report could not subscribe to Rolin's assessment of Voltaire, an 'écrivain sans pudeur' who 'souille aussi bien morale et la religion que le patriotisme.' Nor could it agree that Rousseau had been 'un débauché' and 'un détraqué' in his private life. It rejected Rolin's claims that works like Nouvelle Héloïse and Les Confessions had done nothing more than 'pervertir les

1. AN F17 13347, contains a report headed 'Histoire de l'Eglise par Charles Rolin.' This is neither signed nor dated. Yet a reference to this report by Jolly, 1 June 1944 (AN F17 13390), suggests that it was drawn up at the beginning of the year by the Commission d'Interdiction de Livres Scolaires.

2. Rolin Histoire de l'Eglise p.131
It was dangerous for intellectual patriotism, the report added, to discuss classics of French literature in this way. Similarly, the report denounced as harmful to national unity the combative attitude Rolin adopted towards the 'école publique'. It objected to Rolin's description of Jules Ferry, 'un pontife de l'anticléricalisme', as well as the charge that State 'neutralité' was merely a covert attack on religion. In conclusion the report remarked, 'nous estimons ne pouvoir donner un avis favorable à l'inscription de cet ouvrage; nous pensons que, s'adressant à des enfants, il n'offre pas toute la sérénité requise et qu'il fait peser sur l'école publique, une accusation contre laquelle nous avons le devoir de nous élever.'

In taking action against such a work we may see how attitudes had begun to change within the Education Ministry with Bonnard now in charge. From being deeply critical of the State system in 1940, it had become a defender of the values of the 'école publique' by 1944. Yet this was no consolation to the Church. It was deeply disappointed by the ban. After all the work had passed its own censorship requirements and had received the endorsement of the bishop of Nancy. This led to vigorous protests on the part of the Archevêché de Paris. In a note to the Direction de l'Enseignement Primaire of 12 May 1944, the Archevêché complained that neither it nor the publishing house, Editions Ecole et

1. Rolin Histoire de l'Eglise p.132
2. ibid pp.162-163
Collège, had been informed beforehand of the ban. All they had seen was the 'arrêté' itself in the Journal Officiel. Yet these protests could accomplish little, coming as they did so near to the Liberation.

By and large, however, it was the history books of the old Republic that both Church and State believed to be in most urgent need of revision. Here their attention focussed not so much on the 'neutralité' espoused by these 'manuels scolaires' as on the over-preponderant role accorded to the 1789 Revolution. As La Croix de la Corrèze remarked on 1 September 1940,

Certains manuels d'histoire notamment, rédigés à la hâte par des gens sectaires, fourmillaient d'erreurs historiques, souvent groisières, mais surtout déformaient complètement notre histoire. A les lire, on aurait pu croire que la France n'avait commencé à connaître la gloire, la prospérité, qu'après la Révolution, et qu'il n'y avait avant que misère, ténèbres et guerres. On effaçait ainsi quinze siècles d'histoire, des siècles comme le XIII* ou le XVII*, où la France connut une prospérité et un prestige incomparables dans le monde.²

Similarly, in October 1940, La Croix spoke of the dangers of concentrating too heavily on the Revolution.³ This was a sure way, it alleged, of imprisoning 'des esprits solides et calmes' in a century of ardent conflicts.

The Church believed that the Third Republic, by emphasizing 1789,

1. AN F17 13390, 'Note' of Archevêché de Paris, 12 May 1944
2. La Croix de la Corrèze 1 septembre 1940
3. La Croix 24 octobre 1940
had undermined a sense of patriotism and national unity. According to one examiner of the 'baccalauréat', quoted extensively by La Croix, the result had been that even the most able candidates expressed anti-French views. He was saddened when he read the following stereotyped appreciations of great national figures in examination scripts: 'Louis XVIII était un malade et un impotent, Charles X un crétin, Louis Philippe un égoïste, Napoléon III un idiot, Thiers un vil bourgeois ... Marat et Robespierre les plus belles figures de la Révolution, Louis XVI un imbécile, Marie-Antoinette une hystérique.' Instead he believed that students should concentrate on the glories of pre-Revolutionary France, the achievements of Saint Louis, Jeanne d'Arc and Louis XIV. Others too argued that a more nationalistic version of history, freed from a Republican bias, was essential. In November 1941, Pierre Faure, writing in La Cité Nouvelle, advocated a rehabilitation of the ancien régime. No longer should emphasis be placed on 1789 and the Marxist interpretation it had been given, but on the civilising role of the French monarchy and the values of ancien régime institutions.

In turn, Catholics warmly welcomed the first measures that Vichy took to restructure the history syllabus for primary education. By an 'arrêté' of 14 September 1940, Ripert stated, 'On insistera sur la

1. La Croix 25/26 août 1940
2. Pierre Faure writing in Cité Nouvelle quoted in La Croix 26/27 novembre 1941
continuité de l'effort français à travers tous les régimes, pour construire, maintenir ou relever la France.' In future, less prominence was to be given to the French Revolution, and more to the pre-1789 period, in particular to Henri IV, Richelieu and Mazarin, Louis XIV and the development of the French colonial empire. Later in a circular to primary school teachers of 9 October 1940, Ripert stressed further the continuity of effort that had made France great. In welcoming these changes, La Croix of 24 October 1940 proclaimed, 'l'histoire nationale est un excellent moyen d'éducation nationale.' This new-found emphasis on persistent effort, it maintained, was a sure way of inculcating patriotism and of rescuing the teaching of history from the nefarious influence of 1789. It was now hoped that the essential traits of the French people, which had brought glory in the past, would be recognized: 'l'esprit de générosité, une aptitude spéciale en prosélytisme, le sentiment de la mesure, l'horreur de la forfaiture et de la lâcheté.'

Catholics also had a kind word to say about the changes brought about by Carcopino. Within primary schools, his new instructions of 21-22 March 1942 once more reduced the importance of the 1789 Revolution. Although this was to be seen as part of a long-term trend

1. 'Arrêté' of 14 September 1940 in JO 17 septembre 1940, no.235 p.5033
2. AN F17 13319, Circular of 9 October 1940
3. La Croix 24 octobre 1940
towards a fairer society, greater concentration was to be put on the teaching of Christian values. The new instructions stated, 'le souci même de la vérité commande de montrer aux élèves quelle influence le Christianisme a exercé sur la civilisation occidentale, sur les institutions de notre Patrie et sur la pensée française.' In part, this was in compensation for the abrogation of Chevalier's measures on religious instruction, and, as such, was no substitute for the catechism itself. Nevertheless, La Semaine Religieuse de Paris welcomed these modifications as a revision of the strict 'neutralité' of the State system. For over half a century, it claimed, the history learnt by children from the Republican 'manuels scolaires' had been written in 'un esprit irréligieux, antichrétien et surtout anticatholique.' Now there was a real chance of the 'école publique' becoming 'l'école de tous les Français.'

Likewise, Catholics favoured Carcopino's alterations to the history programmes of secondary schools of 7 January 1942. Again these took the onus away from the Revolution and concentrated on five main periods of human civilisation: Greece; Rome; the Middle Ages; the Renaissance; and the Grand Siècle. Catholics especially welcomed the new emphasis on religious history and the role of the Church. Freed from the

1. SR de Paris 18 avril 1942, no.4595, p.232
2. Please see, pp.108-109
3. SR de Paris 18 avril 1942, no.4595, p.232
sectarianism of the past, 'lycéens' and 'collégiens' would learn about Saint Grégoire le Grand, Saint Vincent de Paul, the social work of the Church and of the function of seminaries. La Croix was further heartened by the inclusion of contemporary religious history, something suppressed by the 1923-38 programmes. Topics to be studied included Pius IX; Leo XIII; Pius X; modernism; and Catholic missions. This way, it was hoped, the teaching of history in State schools would fall more into line with that of Catholic institutions. Together, they would work towards the 'rénovation française.'

As to their own schools, Catholics did not believe that their history teaching was in need of such urgent and radical revision. The 'école libre' already taught the very values which Vichy was now trying to engender within the 'école publique'. In particular, the Church considered that history provided an excellent grounding in the Christian faith. A good summary of the aims of Catholic history teaching was provided by La Croix in March 1941. Here it was stated, 'l'enseignement de l'histoire est regardé comme un puissant moyen d'éducation morale, le plus efficace peut-être après l'enseignement religieux.' Afterwards the article went on to list a series of values inculcated by the study of history: the understanding of the soul; the formation of the heart; the enlightenment of the conscience; the

1. La Croix 10 avril 1942
2. La Croix 11 mars 1941, article entitled 'L'enseignement de l'histoire nationale.'
development of a social sense; and the respect for tradition. Thus history was vital for the affirmation of religious sentiment. The article continued:

Notre histoire est profondément imprégnée de christianisme. Supprimer dans les manuels le rôle bienfaisant de l'église, c'est dénaturée notre passé. Les convictions religieuses expliquent seules les admirables exemples de foi et de vertu de nos ancêtres, les œuvres de toutes sortes qu'ils avaient organisées pour l'instruction de peuple, le soulagement des pauvres et des malades, l'ardeur de leur prosélytisme pour l'extension du royaume de Dieu.'

To place Christ at the forefront in the teaching of history, it was concluded, was to position God in his rightful place in the individual and social life of France.

Accordingly, the history taught in Catholic schools concentrated heavily on religion and the history of the Church itself; so much so that at times it becomes difficult to distinguish between what constituted history and what comprised religious instruction. Under Vichy this trend was emphasised further. What new textbooks that were produced concentrated heavily on the Church and Christianity. Among the most notable of these was Histoire de France, written by L.Christiani, doyen of the Faculté Libre des Lettres de Lyon. Hailed by La Semaine Religieuse de Lyon² as being in the true spirit of the

1. La Croix 11 mars 1941
2. SR de Lyon 27 mars 1942, no.18, p.200
National Revolution, this consisted of three volumes. The first, the 'cours élémentaire', was intended for seven to nine year olds, and dealt with the history of France from its origins to 1453. The second, the 'cours moyen' for students between nine and eleven, took the story from 1453 to the twentieth century. And the third volume covered the whole period preparing older children for the CEP. In each, the beneficial role of the Catholic Church figured prominently. In the first volume, Christiani remarked on the strength of Christianity in France during the Middle Ages and how the clergy had alleviated the burden of feudalism: 'les curés dirigaient les paroisses des campagnes et défendaient les paysans contre les seigneurs trop durs.' Likewise in volume three, he wrote under the heading 'La vie religieuse mérovingienne', that 'La France était devenue entièrement catholique. Les évêques exerçaient une influence énorme et très bienfaisante sur toute la population.' All in all, Christiani painted a rosy picture of medieval France in which the Church had played a crucial part in holding the people together.

1. L. Christiani Histoire de France. Cours élémentaire des origines à 1453 (Emmanuel Vite, Lyon et Paris, 1941); Histoire de France. Cours Moyen de 1453 à nos jours (Emmanuel Vite, Lyon et Paris, 1941); and Histoire de France des Origines à Nos Jours. Cours Préparatoire au Certificat d’Etudes (Emmanuel Vite, Lyon et Paris, 1942) (Hereafter Christiani Histoire de France Vols 1-3)

2. Christiani Histoire de France Vol.1, p.39

3. ibid, Vol 3, p.69
Christiani believed that it was in the later, post-1453 period, France had turned badly. A series of events and crises had steadily eroded the strength of the Church and disseminated disunity and division. Luther was bitterly dismissed, 'C'était un tempérament ardent, porté aux scruples et à la colère, un écrivain torrentiel, un tribun impétueux et irrésistible.' " As to Voltaire, "

"Il est le vrai maître de l'opinion. Et comme il a un esprit très piquant, très moqueur, très mordant, comme il ne respecte rien, comme il prétend faire appel en tout à la raison pure et en substituer les lumières à celles de la tradition communale, il crée, en France, un courant d'incrédulité railleuse à l'égard de tout ce que les siècles antérieurs avaient vénéré et respecté chez nous.'

But it was the Revolution itself on which Christiani poured most scorn. Explained away largely in the unemotional terms of a financial crisis, bad harvests, a presumptuous aristocracy and the critical spirit of the Enlightenment, it had dangerously divided the nation. It was subsequently to blame for the nineteenth-century attacks on the Church and the declining influence of religion. This was a vivid contrast to the healthy picture of a Christian medieval France Christiani had earlier drawn. Nevertheless, he took hope in that through the shock of the recent defeat France had rallied to her senses and had returned

1. Christiani Histoire de France Vol.3, p.185
2. ibid pp.295-296
3. ibid p.314 et seq
to her traditional values. He concluded, 'S'il est une vérité qui éclate
dans toute cette dernière partie de notre histoire, c'est la suivante:
une France divisée est une France affaiblie et en péril de mort, tandis
qu'une France unie est une France forte et immortelle. C'est pourquoi
tous les enfants de France doivent se grouper autour du maréchal Pétain
qui ne veut que l'union de tous les Français, autour de ce beau
programme: Travail, Famille, Patrie.'

Christiani, then, provides a good example of what Catholics hoped to
achieve through the teaching of history. The heavy emphasis on the role
of the Church itself within the development of France was carefully
designed to inculcate a respect for the traditional Christian values of
patriotism, discipline and the family. In this way, history was valued
almost as highly as the catechism itself. Yet Christiani's Histoire de
France also demonstrates a more recent development: its emphasis on
local history. In the final volume, partly in response to developments
within State education, Christiani added a special section on local
history simply entitled 'Notions Elémentaires d'histoire régionale et
locale.'

The importance of local history had been recognised early on by the
Vichy government. In the new programmes for primary schools of 14
September 1940, Ripert stipulated that four to six lessons were to be

2. ibid, Vol 3, pp.451-462
put aside each week for this purpose. Here one would speak to children about events 'qui se sont déroulés dans leur propre région quand les faits historiques ont présenté un intérêt certain.' By these means, Vichy again intended to divert attention away from the 1789 Revolution and focus children’s attention on the provinces of a medieval and semi-feudal France.

The Church warmly welcomed these changes. La Croix of 26 September 1940 regarded the study of a local area as a valuable means of exciting the interest of a student in his native village.  

La Semaine Religieuse de Belley spoke of how the teacher would now be able 'd'évoquer le Moyen Age religieux et féodal devant la vieille église ou auprès du donjon ruiné qui domine le village.' Indeed, this new-found emphasis on local history was valued most for what it revealed about a region's religiosity. Christiani provided a number of examples of how a teacher could exemplify the spiritual life of an area. In particular he recommended a study of local saints and how they had given their name to either the village or town. To illustrate this point he gave the example

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1. 'Arrêté' of 14 September 1940 in JO 17 septembre 1940, no.235, p.5033
2. La Croix 26 septembre 1940
3. SR de Belley 24 octobre 1940, no.43, p.348
of Saint Quentin:

L'antique cité gauloise Sanarobriva avait reçu, au Xe siècle, le nom d'Augusta Viromanduorum. Or, en l'an 287, un courageux chrétien, Quintinus, y subit le martyre. Le corps de la glorieuse victime fut retrouvé par saint Eloi, vers 641. Les précieuses reliques, portées à Laon pour échapper aux Normands, en 881, furent rapportées dans la ville où on les vénérerait auparavant, en 884. À cette occasion, cette ville prit le nom de Saint-Quentin, qu'elle apporte encore.

In this way, he argued, the memory of local saints would be kept alive.

This constant reference to saints and great national figures reflects another concern of Catholic education. The Church had long since held the study of great men as one of the most effective means of engendering a respect for Catholic values among the young. In this regard, La Croix quoted Renan, 'C'est par les héros ... qui se maintient la morale moyenne, car l'homme a besoin d'avoir devant lui un modèle qui oblige à sortir de lui-même pour pratiquer la vertu.' Thus there was nothing new in the cult of heroes in Catholic schools under Vichy. What was new was the intensity to which it was taken. To many in the Church, the shock of defeat was ample proof that the lessons and examples of these great men had been ignored or forgotten.

Foremost among those heroes presented for adulation came Pétain

2. La Croix 7 décembre 1940
himself. Already a highly-venerated figure in Catholic schools before the war, his cult reached new proportions under Vichy. This took several different forms. His portrait hung in every classroom; textbooks were dedicated to him; Christmas trees were planted in his honour; and children were urged to write and send their drawings to him. By February 1941, Vichy had received over 2,200,000 of these drawings. Later in October 1941 the government announced that sales of Pétain’s portrait and other memorabilia had totalled 16,848,000F, the profits of which were to be used for the Secours National. Catholic schools took a full and active role in this adulation, ensuring that they were not outdone by the 'école publique'. When in December 1941 the Academy Inspector urged State schools in the Puy-en-Velay to write to Pétain on the values of loyalty and frankness, the bishop directed Catholic schools to do the same.

On its own volition, at Christmas 1941, the Catholic 'école primaire' at Donzenac in the diocese of Tulle, sent Pétain a collection of drawings on the theme of winter with the following message:

1. AN F17 13319, Circular of 7 February 1941
2. AN F17 13320, Circular of 15 October 1941
3. SR du Puy-en-Velay 12 décembre 1941, no.11, p.111
Pour que l'un de nos frères, membre souffrant du Christ, ait froid...
Pour que le grand coeur de notre cher Maréchal saigne moins...
Pour que la rançon de notre Patrie tant aimée soit plus proche et plus complete...
Pour contribuer enfin par nous-mêmes à tisser la robe d'hiver de la France douloureuse.'

For its pains the school received a photograph of the Marshal and a letter of thanks from his 'secrétaire particulier'. Yet elsewhere the efforts of Catholic schools were rewarded by a trip to see Pétain himself. One such school from Canourgue in the Lozère sent 54 of its girls to Vichy taking examples of their embroidery as gifts for the Marshal.® There they were treated to an audience with Pétain and a fleeting glimpse of the 'silhouette légendaire' of Laval as he was leaving the Hôtel du Parc!

Within schools themselves history and morality classes were often turned over to an appreciation of the virtues of the Marshal. This led René Jeanneret, a Catholic Inspector of Primary Education, to produce a special textbook entitled Maréchal Pétain. Pour Chaque Jour de l'Année. Maximes et Principes. Extraits des Messages au Peuple Français.® Drawing on a wide selection of his speeches, this work illustrates many of the values that the Marshal was considered to offer children. Pétain was to

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1. SR de Tulle 14 février 1941, no.4, p.51
2. QC de Gévaudan 19 février 1943, no.6, pp.85-87
be revered as 'Le Chef' who had given France the gift of his person. As such, he was held as an example of patriotism, national unity, responsibility and sacrifice. In particular, Jeanneret reflected Pétain's commitment to 'Le Travail'. Children were taught, 'Le travail des Français est le moyen le plus noble et le plus digne que nous ayons de devenir maîtres de notre sort.' In turn, Jeanneret put forward Pétain's version of a corporatist State, freed from class struggle and the egoism of capitalism. From a speech of 8 July 1941, children learnt the maxim, 'Un peuple est un hiérarchie de familles, de professions, de communes, de responsabilités administratives, de familles spirituelles, articulées et fédérées pour former une Patrie.' Altogether Jeanneret's selection of Pétainist principles was a rousing espousal of the values of the National Revolution.

After Pétain, it was Joan of Arc whose message was regarded as most relevant to the young. Once again, Joan was already a popular figure in Catholic schools before the war. Yet never had her feast day been celebrated with so much enthusiasm. By a circular of 15 April 1941, Carcopino instructed schools to take a full and active part in these celebrations. Catholic schools played an especially prominent role. At Tulle in the Corrèze some 5,000 young people participated in an open-air

1. Jeanneret *Maréchal Pétain* p.32
2. ibid p.52
3. AN F17 13319, Circular of 15 April 1941 Carcopino to Rectors and Academy Inspectors
mass conducted by Mgr Chappoulie. At St-Claude in the Jura, her festival day brought together Catholic schoolchildren and numerous youth groups, among them the Compagnons de France, Scouts, Eclaireurs and the JEC. At Limoges 15,000 children marched by a statue of Joan. Here Mgr Rastouil issued a message to the youth of his diocese. In this he pronounced, 'ce que nous demandons à tous, c'est surtout d'élèver leur âme à la hauteur des vertus chrétiennes et françaises dont Jeanne est l'amicable modèle: docilité aux voix d'En Haut, intrépide courage, inaltérable pureté, foi ardente dans les destinées de la Patrie.' And at Lyon Cardinal Gerlier delivered a similar speech. 'Jeunesse', he declared, 'ayez courage, marchez derrière Jeanne et comme elle, ne tremblez pas devant l'effort.'

Among her many virtues Joan was especially valued as a figure of national unity. As Pétain himself announced, 'Martyre de l'Unité Nationale, Jeanne d'Arc patronne de nos villages et de nos villes, est le symbole de la France.' This unity was expressed in several different ways. Children were urged to pledge their allegiance to 'la patrie' and

1. La Croix 13 mai 1941
2. Echo de Montagne 16 mai 1941
3. La Croix 13 mai 1941
4. SR de Limoges 9 mai 1941, no.19, p.168
5. La Croix 13 mai 1941
6. La Vie Catholique p.75
work towards national revival. Speaking to 20,000 young people at Vichy on Joan of Arc day in 1942, Lamirand stated, 'il faut qu'à l'exemple de Jeanne, les Français ne décident enfin à mettre tout en oeuvre pour sauver le pays.' Likewise she was presented as a rallying point around Pétain. Frequent allusions were drawn between the two heroes. Children were taught how in the fourteenth century France had been troubled by internal division but how Joan, like Pétain, had emerged as a saviour. Such comparisons must have flattered the old man. Seemingly he had forgotten the disparaging remark he had made about Joan in 1929. When accompanying Poincaré and Doumergue to the five hundredth anniversary of the deliverance of Orléans, Pétain had been heard to comment that he was not interested in Joan. 'Le moindre de mes poilus', he sneered, 'a fait cent fois plus.'

For the Church, however, Joan was regarded most highly as a symbol of youthful piety. This was emphasized in another textbook by René Jeanneret entitled *Le Miracle de Jeanne. Histoire de Jeanne d'Arc* published in 1942. Intended for Catholic primary schools this concentrated as much on her religious qualities as her military victories. In Chapter Two, 'Jeanne, Modèle des Enfants de France',

1. Lamirand quoted in *Les Jeunes Fêtent Jeanne d'Arc* (Imprimerie Commerciale, Lyon, 1942) p.3
2. Zay *Souvenirs et Solitude* p.272
Jeanneret remarked that although she did not go to school, she was a sage and pious girl who had always fulfilled her duties towards God. Later on, we are informed that, 'Sa mère lui a tout appris, son 'Pater', son 'Ave', son 'Credo', en filant de la laine.' She went willingly to Church, never having to be reminded by her parents, sometimes even going to mass twice on a Sunday. Thus Joan was presented as a deeply pious, well-behaved and simple country girl who cherished her family and accepted her role in life until the divine voices called her to deliver France. Yet Joan's piety was not always portrayed in such passive terms. Marc Boegner recalls that in one Catholic brochure, it was argued that if it had not been for Joan France would have fallen under the nefarious influence of the English and subsequently have become protestant and heretical.

A more serious problem associated with the cult of Joan under Vichy was, of course, her use as a symbol of patriotism. While the Church taught children how well Joan had loved her country, it neglected to add that it had also been her love for France that led her to expel a foreign invader. Even from children it was difficult to conceal this aspect of her life, particularly from those in the occupied zone where

2. ibid p.17
3. ibid p.23
4. Boegner *L'Exigence Oecuménique* p.143
it had a special significance. Consequently, as early as May 1941, Joan's Feast Day was marked by anti-German sentiments. For example, at the Pensionnat-Notre-Dame-de-Sion in Paris the nuns had their children sing a cantique 'Ave, Ave, Ave, Jeanne' which contained the following verses:

3. Dure est le suffrance
   Et long le chemin
   Pour, de toute France,
   Bannir le Germain.

4. En vain il s'égare
   Au pays lorrain;
   Chassons le barbare
   Au delà du Rhin

6. Des hordes vandales
   Prépare l'affront
   De nos cathédrales
   Relève le front

This produced vigorous protests from the Germans and the two nuns involved were relieved of their functions. Likewise greater precautions were taken by the Vichy government to suppress the ambiguity of her message. These are evident in the official instructions for celebration of her Feast Day in 1942 which were clearly designed to leave nothing to chance or open interpretation. But how successful such safeguards

1. AN AJ 40 557, Letter of Sr M... G... de ...S to Mgr Beaussart, 18 July 1942
2. Instructions pour l'organisation de la manifestation JEUNESSE FOI VOLONTE À l'occasion de la fête JEANNE D'ARC, 10 mai 1942 (Edition du Ministère de l'Information, Vichy, 1942)
were is hard to say, especially as many might have taken part in such ceremonies with the secret intention of paying homage to Joan as the patriotic Resister. This was the view of one observer who wrote to Bonnard on 6 August 1942, 'Il était, certes, facile d'obtenir l'unanimité d'opinion sur Jeanne d'Arc puisque Gaullistes eux-mêmes la revendiquent.' Yet as the war progressed even this sort of unity became harder to maintain with an increasing number of people looking to Joan as a deliverer of their country.

Another ambivalent figure under Vichy was Charles Péguy. Popular in Catholic secondary schools, youth groups and among university students, Péguy was presented as a symbol of unselfish heroism who had died in 1914 fighting for France. Yet once again it was difficult to conceal certain aspects of his life: that he had died at Villeroy fighting the Germans; that he had been an advocate of Jaurès; and a defender of Dreyfus. In an article entitled 'Du Péguy qu'on oublie.', the clandestine Cahiers du Témoignage Chrétien reminded Catholics that Péguy had also been a fierce critic of antisemitism. Other Catholic heroes, however, were far less contentious. There were certainly no Republican figures. Instead, the Church chose such men as Saint Louis, Bayard, Montcalm, Lyautey and de Foucauld, the Catholic missionary and explorer. The life of de Foucauld was considered as particularly edifying for the

1. AN F17 13336, Lt Colonel P.H... to Bonnard, 6 August 1942
young.' He had lived the life of a rakish playboy before becoming interested in religion and undergoing a Paulian conversion. This deep spiritual experience led him to become a Trappist monk in 1901 and to retire to the Sahara as a missionary where he was eventually killed by the natives. Like de Foucauld Catholic youth was urged to turn its back on worldly and material pleasures and lead a life of sacrifice, hardship and upright morality.

The success of this cult for heroes remains highly doubtful. Apart from the double meaning of several of the figures involved, this constant adulation probably did more to dampen the enthusiasm of the young rather than awaken the emulation desired. Elsewhere too the Church's attempts to restructure the content of education under Vichy must be judged as a failure. Within its own schools the shock of the defeat did not produce any serious questioning of the values it already taught. Instead the Church kept to a tried and trusted formula. Likewise its recipe for the future regeneration of France was more of the same. If there were any new ingredients then they amounted to an even greater emphasis on religion itself. As to the State school the Church could thank Vichy for having curbed something of the excessive zeal of 'neutralité'. But this had only gone a little way. The shortages of wartime soon meant that many of the textbooks Catholics objected to

1. La Croix 3/4 août 1941
found their way back into use. Otherwise, the 'instituteurs' continued to teach a watered down version of what they had taught before. Yet most serious of all, the Church failed to understand that it could not refashion State education in a Catholic mould. To expect the 'école publique' to teach a sanitised Catholic version of events, purged of all Republican ideals, was unrealistic in the extreme. Ultimately, this lack of comprehension doomed the whole experiment to failure.
In 1940 it was fashionable to criticize State education not only for its 'neutralité', but also for its 'bookishness'. For too long, it was alleged, the programmes of both primary and secondary schools had been too vast and encyclopedic. While these might have dispensed a narrow intellectual 'instruction' they had failed to provide an 'education' in the wider sense of the term. As Pétain himself remarked in his article for La Revue des Deux Mondes of 15 August 1940, 'Il y avait à la base de notre système éducatif, une illusion profonde: c'était de croire qu'il suffit d'instruire les esprits pour former les cœurs et tremper les caractères.' The results of this process, argued Pétain, had been to inculcate an excessive individualism and to have undermined a commitment to 'la patrie'. Now it was time for the State to educate the individual how to exist within the body of the family, society and the nation. To achieve this, Vichy busily set about devising a 'general education' which would not only teach the values of 'Travail, Famille, Patrie', but also practical skills such as physical education and sport.

These ideas were firmly in line with those of the Church. Earlier in 1934 Cardinal Verdier had written, 'Dans l'oeuvre de la formation de l'homme on distingue l'éducation et l'instruction. On proclame avec

1. Halls The Youth of Vichy France p.186. Also see P.Crouzet 'La Vraie Révolution Nationale dans l'Instruction Publique', in Les Cahiers Violeta (Paris, Didier, 1941) p.8 et seq

2. Pétain's article quoted in La Croix 29/30 septembre 1940
raison que ces deux éléments constitutifs ne devraient jamais être séparés. L'homme en effet n'est complet, le 'status virtutis' n'est atteint que si l'enfant et l'adolescent reçoivent à un égal degré ces deux influences.' Nonetheless, the Church had misgivings about introducing a similar programme of 'general education' into Catholic schools. These reservations were twofold. Firstly, the Church already considered that it provided a sufficiently broad moral upbringing. If this needed to be strengthened any further then it was best achieved through a greater emphasis on religion. In 1940 only a minority of liberal Catholics conceded that 'enseignement libre' was just as guilty as 'enseignement public' in dispensing an 'instruction' instead of an 'education'. Secondly, and more importantly, the Church was worried that the implementation of Vichy's initiatives might undermine the independence of Catholic schools. Thus 'general education' was never fully accepted by the Church and on occasion, as in the case of physical education, actively resisted.

1. Cardinal Verdier La Question Scolaire pp.42-43
2. Paul Crouzet recalls that on 24 July 1940 he encountered at Vichy four Jesuit 'professeurs' from Lille. Crouzet duly asked them whether or not 'enseignement libre' had provided a better moral preparation for war than 'enseignement officiel'. They replied, 'Ni plus ni moins que l'enseignement laïque.' 'C'est leur conviction unanime', records Crouzet, 'Unanime le sentiment que leur enseignement comme le nôtre, assure plus instruction que l'éducation.' See P. Crouzet Et C'est la Même Ciel Bleu p.238
Broad consensus, at least, was reached on the teaching of patriotism. Immediate steps were taken to fortify a sense of 'la patrie' among the young. By a ministerial circular of 9 August 1940 Mireaux announced that the first lesson of the 'rentrée' in State schools, planned for 2 September, was to be dedicated to 'la France'. The lesson was to begin with a minute's silence for those killed in the war followed by a reading of excerpts from Pétain's speeches to the nation of 16, 20, 23 and 25 June 1940. Afterwards the teacher was to give a talk on, 'les conditions essentielles du redressement national, sur les devoirs nouveaux qu'il impose à tous les Français, et plus particulièrement à la jeunesse qui porte en elle toutes les promesses d'avenir.'

The Church warmly applauded Mireaux's circular and many Catholic schools followed its directives. On the eve of the 'rentrée', abbé Thellier de Poncheville wrote in La Croix, 'Il est entendu que les premières heures scolaires seront consacrées à une leçon de patriotismisme. On la voudrait si vibrante qu'elle eût des résonnances profondes en ces âmes légères et que son retentissement leur fût bienfaisant pour toute leur vie.' During this first lesson, maintained Thellier de Poncheville, there was no need for the teacher to open a

2. La Croix 1/2 septembre 1940
book, but to recall, 'le passé légendaire d'une patrie qui fut, dans ses périodes les plus nobles, le missionnaire de Dieu et le porte-drapeau de l'humanité.' Elsewhere too Catholic teachers were urged to emphasize the Christian roots of France. For example, in the diocese of Rodez the minute's silence was to be followed by a prayer on the spiritual values necessary for 'le redressement national'. With a similar aim in mind, Catholic teachers in the diocese of Belley were instructed to give the following commentary to Pétain's speeches: 'on insistera sur les grandes vertus de travail, de charité, de sacrifice, nécessaires au relèvement de notre pays, et on montrera que ces vertus trouvent leur meilleure garantie dans l'amour de Dieu et la parfaite formation religieuse de la conscience.'

Another means of encouraging solidarity behind 'la patrie' was through the colours ceremony, or 'le salut au drapeau'. At the beginning of the school week pupils and their teachers gathered in the playground or at the nearby war memorial to witness the raising of the national flag. Quite where this practice originated remains unclear, but it may well have begun in a Catholic primary school in the Ardèche. Strong evidence to support this comes from a report on the annual general assembly of the Association Syndicale des Instituteurs et Institutrices Libres for the diocese of Viviers, meeting at Lavoulte on 28

1. RR de Rodez 6 septembre 1940, no.36, p.345
2. SR de Belley 29 août 1940, no.35, p.281
November 1940.' Here the president of the Association recounted the example given the previous September by an 'école libre de garçons' at Chomérac. Each Monday morning, after prayers, the pupils had turned towards the crucifix, the statue of the Virgin Mary and the French flag to recite the following verse:

Sous le regard de Dieu, notre Père, avec la protection de Marie, notre Mère, obéissant aux consignes du Maréchal Pétain, notre Chef, Enfants de France, au travail, pour la famille.

Yet whatever its origins, the colours ceremony quickly caught on. In December 1940 it was made compulsory in all of the 350 Catholic schools in the Ardèche. At the start of 1941 it was also made obligatory in the diocese of Nîmes and Montpellier. Thus, as early as 16 February 1941, La Croix de la Haute Savoie could report, 'Le magnifique exemple, donné en premier lieu par une école chrétienne du Midi, est rapidement suivi par des écoles catholiques de tous les départements, et aussi avec des

1. This report may be found in the Bulletin des Ecoles Libres du Diocèse de Viviers décembre 1940, no.10, in SR de Viviers 6 décembre 1940, no.49, p.473. Also see La Croix 18 janvier 1941.

2. SR de Viviers 3 janvier 1941, no.1

3. SR de Nîmes 23 mars 1941, no.11, p.146

4. SR de Montpellier 8 mars 1941, no.10, p.116
variantes, par les écoles de l'Etat.'" Before long, the paper concluded, the colours ceremony would be a universal practice in all of France.

As well as promoting solidarity behind 'la patrie' the colours ceremony was used to facilitate greater unity between Catholic and public schools. Often representatives of both Church and State would stand together to watch the raising of the national flag. For example, one ceremony at Mallemort in the diocese of Aix was attended by the 'sous-préfet', members of the municipal council and the superior of the 'petit-séminaire'. A ceremony at the Pensionnat-du-Godefroy-de-Bouillon at Clermont-Ferrand had an even more impressive guest list including the bishop, the prefect, the director of Catholic education and the academy inspector. Some schools made such displays of unity a regular feature. In the village of Maurs in the Cantal the headmasters of the 'école libre' and the 'école publique' agreed to hold a joint ceremony every morning with pupils from both schools taking it in turn to raise the national flag.

The significance of these occasions did not escape the notice of the occupying forces. For a short while in 1941 the Germans banned the

1. La Croix de la Haute Savoie 16 février 1941
2. SR de l'Archdiocèse d'Aix 13 avril 1941, no.15, p.172
3. SR du Puy-en-Velay 29 mars 1941, no.13, p.141
4. La Croix 22 mars 1941
'salut au drapeau' in Vichy youth camps.' It was also prohibited in schools in the Seine-et-Oise, although the matter there was eventually left to the decision of the local military commander. It is not difficult to understand German concern. While the colours ceremony was intended to instil a moderate sense of patriotism, it could take on more militant nationalistic overtones, especially in the southern zone where there was less direct interference from the occupying troops. For instance, one ceremony at Quezac in the Cantal not only brought together pupils, teachers and parents, but also the 'curé' and members of the Légion des Combattants. After a mass had been recited for the dead of both World Wars the national flag was hoisted close to the war memorial by three children left orphaned by the 1940 campaign. The ceremony closed with a rousing rendition of 'La Marseillaise'. It is no surprise, then, that these displays of unity became far less frequent after the total occupation of France in November 1942.

Other values Church and State wanted to engender within the young proved less contentious. One such was honesty. According to La Croix of 30 August 1940 the French were traditionally an honest race. Yet

1. AN F17 13320, Circular of 24 December 1941
2. AN AJ 40 557, Note of 12 May 1941
3. La Croix du Cantal 27 juillet 1941
4. La Croix 30 août 1940
recently there had been a slackening of standards which had led to defeat. In an earlier article of 10 August 1940, entitled 'Pour Plus d'Honnêté', La Croix announced, 'C'est le manque de conscience qui a conduit le pays là où il est.' It was thus necessary to teach the young the divine commandment, 'Bien d'autruie ne prendras.' Pétain himself took up the same theme. In a radio broadcast of 13 October 1941 he spoke to schoolchildren about the need for greater loyalty and honesty. 'Je suis attristé', announced the Marshal, 'en pensant que certains d'entre vous ne résistent pas à la tentation, et qu'ils copient ou ils trichent pour gagner quelques points. C'est une faute, et je veux qu'elle cesse.'

To stamp out cheating in the classroom Vichy set up special Ligues de Loyauté among children. These kept a careful watch on their schoolfellows ensuring they did not copy in their examinations or crib their homework. Later on these were employed for the more sinister purpose of informing on anti-government activities. Meanwhile, within Catholic education, a Comité de Lutte Contre le Copiage was established by the JEC at Lyon on 19 May 1941. This quickly co-ordinated efforts throughout Catholic schools to combat dishonesty. Sometimes it put on

1. La Croix 10 août 1940
2. Marshal Pétain Message du Maréchal Pétain aux Écoliers de France, 13 Octobre 1941 (1941) This speech may also be found in AN F17 13320
3. La Croix 12 mai 1941
special plays for children to illustrate the pitfalls of cheating. For La Croix of 8/9 June 1941 such efforts were a positive step towards 'le redressement national'. To prove the need for greater honesty the paper went on to list a catalogue of common cheating practices in examinations. These ranged from the obvious - looking at another candidate's script over their shoulder - to the more ingenious - the concealment of prized information in the barrel of a fountain pen.

Maybe such practical tips were an unwise move as the campaign for greater honesty was a conspicuous failure. In 1942, for example, questions for the 'baccalauréat' became known in advance and were openly on sale in several large towns. This brought a stern condemnation from Bonnard. In a speech to rectors and academy inspectors of 24 July 1942 he denounced the leaking of questions as a sign of decadence. 'Le pire moment de la vie d'une nation', he maintained, 'est celui où les fautes commises par le petit nombre sont admises par le grand, et où le relâchement de presque tous n'est que trop commode à la corruption de quelques-uns.' As Bonnard was quick to point out, cheating was not just confined to State education. At one private school parents had openly

1. La Croix 13 juin 1941
2. La Croix 8/9 juin 1941
conspired with their children to obtain questions for the 'baccalauréat' from a corrupt administrator. To prevent a repetition of this, concluded Bonnard, it was not only necessary for teachers to be on their guard, but for the Ligues de Loyauté to redouble their efforts and for families to teach the values of honesty.

This reference to the family reflects another aspect of 'general education.' Both Vichy and the Church were concerned to strengthen a commitment to 'la famille' among the young. For Catholics, in particular, the family was a sacred institution. It was a fundamental unit in the Church's corporatist and hierarchical vision of society. This had been made clear several times before the war, most notably perhaps by the ACA meeting on 23 March 1934.² Here the hierarchy had declared:

...la morale chrétienne professe également le respect de la famille. Elle y voit une institution naturelle, nécessaire à la fois au bien et au développement individuel de ses membres et à l'établissement de la société, dont elle est la cellule initiale. Aussi maintient-elle les lois d'unité, d'indissolubilité et de fécondité, nécessaires à sa fonction, et

1. For an introduction to Vichy's policies on the family see A. Coutrot 'La Politique Familiale de Vichy', in Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques Le Gouvernement de Vichy, 1940-1942 (Paris, Armand Colin, 1972) pp.245-263, and M. Pollard 'Women and the National Revolution', in Kedward and Austin eds. Vichy France and the Resistance pp.36-47

2. Declaration of the ACA of 23 March 1934 in Deroo L'Episcopat Français p.257
During the Occupation itself the Church once more stressed these themes. Several pastoral letters for the Carême of 1941 were devoted to 'la famille'. Later that year on 7-9 August a special conference on the family was organised at Lourdes by the Alliance des Maisons d’Éducation Chrétienne et de l’Union. Attended by some 300 Catholic teachers and parish priests from over 40 dioceses the meeting called on parents to value the family more highly. Otherwise, it was feared that children would develop an excessive individualism and would fail to acquire a taste for hard work and discipline.

Certainly the Church was worried that the institution of the family was on the decline. High divorce rates and a static birth rate between the wars were ample proof of this. In turn this decline was variously interpreted. Cardinal Suhard developed Frédéric Le Play’s argument that the root cause lay with the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen of 1789. Through the emphasis placed on the individual and equal inheritance, reflected Suhard, the Revolution had undermined the

1. For example, see the pastoral letter of Mgr Martin in SR du Puy-en-Velay 21 février 1941, no.21, pp.214-221
2. La Croix 18 septembre 1941
3. Cardinal Suhard The Church Today p.79
authority of the father and had given children the means to go to court against each other. As a result family property had been divided and children no longer lived with their grandparents or parents. For others the problem lay more with the laicism of the Third Republic. To La Croix of 7 October 1941 this was the 'assassin de la famille française'. Jules Ferry, Maquet, Combes, Viviani, et consorts avaient bien travaillé', it maintained, 'ils étaient parvenus à faire du peuple de France un peuple sans religion et sans foi, ayant oublié le chemin de l'église, du confessionnal, de la Table Sainte.'

Vichy shared similar worries and concerns. In a speech of 15 September 1940 Pétain announced, 'la famille est la cellule essentielle; elle est l'assise même de l'édifice social; c'est sur elle qu'il faut bâtir; si elle fléchit, tout est perdu; tant qu'elle tient, tout peut être sauvé.' Accordingly, there was some consensus between Church and State about how to teach the values of the family. Special lessons were held on the dangers of 'dénatalité'. By a circular of 24 December 1941 pupils in State schools were instructed to keep a chart in the classroom monitoring the level of population in their commune. To help teachers

1. La Croix 7 octobre 1941
2. Speech of 15 September 1940 cited in Jeanneret Maréchal Pétain, p.26
3. AN F17 13324, Circular of 24 December 1941
with such lessons the Commissariat Général à la Famille produced special brochures. In one of these, *L'Ecole et Famille* published in 1943, the opening chapter, 'Le Plus Grand Péril', began with the stern warning, 'Ce n'est ni la guerre, ni l'invasion, ni la perte des colonies, de l'armée, de la marine. Le plus grand péril pour la France, c'est la dépopulation.' Similar lessons were held in Catholic schools. In the diocese of Puy-en-Velay Mgr Martin recommended in February 1941 that children should read the messages of Marshal Pétain on the perils of 'dénatalité' and the 'exode' from the countryside. In René Jeanneret's textbook, *Maréchal Pétain. Pour Chaque Jour de l'Année. Extrait des Messages au Peuple Français*, a large section was devoted to 'La Famille'. Children learnt the maxim, 'L'individu n'existe que par la Famille', and, 'Le droit des Familles est antérieur et supérieur à celui de l'État.'

Among the ideals of the family those of motherhood were especially valued. These were promoted through the Fête des Mères. This was already a traditional date in the Church's calendar. The custom had first begun in America, but after 1925 it rapidly caught on as a religious festival in France. On 21 June 1934 the ACA gave its official blessing to 'la

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1. *L'Ecole et la Famille* (Lille, l'Office de Propagande Générale, 1943) contained in AN F17 13324
2. *SR du Puy-en-Velay* 21 février 1941, no.21, p.217
3. Jeanneret *Maréchal Pétain* p.26
4. Deroo *L'Épiscopat Français* p.264
célébration religieuse de la "Fête des Mères" réalisé déjà dans plusieurs diocèses." In 1941 Mother's Day, held on 25 May, was celebrated with particular fervour. In the Ardèche the Fédération des Familles Nombreuses instructed Catholic teachers to prepare their pupils with a special essay on 'l'amour maternel'. In the following year in the Haute Vienne Catholic children took part in a special competition. Pupils in primary schools were to draw a picture with the caption 'J'aide maman' whereas their elders in secondary education were to design a poster with the title 'Journée des Mères'. The best of these drawings were then to be displayed in the gardens of the Evêché on Mother's Day itself, 31 May.

Mother's Day also achieved prominence in State schools. By a circular of 12 May 1941 Carcopino ordered that at least one lesson in the week leading up to the festival should be devoted to the theme of motherhood. On top of this pupils were to be encouraged to write a letter to their mother celebrating her virtues. The best of these would be chosen by the Academy Inspectors and then sent to Vichy where a selection would be read out on the radio during a special programme on

1. Deroo L'Episcopat Français p.264
2. SR de Viviers 16 mai 1941, no.20, p.184
3. SR de Limoges 24 avril 1942, no.17, p.165
4. AN F17 13319, Circular of 12 May 1941
the French family. In 1942 Carcopino sent out almost identical instructions.' The Church warmly welcomed these moves. On 9 May 1942 Mgr Gaudel, bishop of Fréjus and Toulon, declared, 'Le Gouvernement désire que la Journée des Mères soit célébrée avec le maximum d'éclat... L'Eglise ne peut que se réjouir de toutes les dispositions officielles qui peuvent favoriser dans le pays le renouveau familial.'

The values which the Church hoped to promote through Mother's Day may be illustrated by a speech of Mgr Rastouil, bishop of Limoges, delivered at the close of May 1942. In this he celebrated the fecundity of motherhood. It was a woman's duty to have children. Within society the mother's place was at home, 'au foyer'. Here, through her humble and heroic efforts, she would bring up her children and care for her husband. These themes were also stressed in a pastoral letter of 1943 by Mgr Couderc, bishop of Viviers; yet he added that it was the mother's responsibility to guarantee the religious and moral upbringing of her children. In this way the Church re-affirmed its long held belief that it was the natural destiny of women to produce children and care for the spiritual welfare of the family.

On a more practical level the values of motherhood were fostered through 'enseignement ménager'. This taught young girls, usually

1. AN F17 13321, Circular of 12 February 1942
2. SR de Fréjus et Toulon 9 mai 1942, no.19, pp.161-162
3. SR de Limoges 29 mai 1942, no.22, pp.201-202
4. SR de Viviers 19 mars 1943, no.12, and 26 mars 1943, no.13
between the ages of fourteen and seventeen, domestic skills such as knitting, sewing, cooking and household hygiene. Once again 'enseignement ménager' was already a traditional feature of Catholic education. La Croix of 29 May 1942 recalled how in the eighteenth century nuns had instructed young girls in the skills they would later require in their future role as mothers. Yet it was not until 1882 that 'enseignement ménager' became a subject in its own right in Catholic schools. It rapidly caught on. In 1920 in the Lozère it was made a compulsory component for girls taking their school-leaving certificate, the 'certificat libre d'études primaires'. In 1940 it received a further boost. As La Semaine Religieuse de Viviers of 11 October commented, 'L'enseignement ménager est à l'ordre du jour. Il tiendra désormais, et à juste titre, une place importante dans les programmes scolaires.' Several dioceses heeded these words and set up new training centres for teachers of 'enseignement ménager'. For example, in the diocese of Puy-en-Velay the number of these nearly doubled from 28 in 1939 to 48 by 1942.

It is not difficult to see why the Church valued 'enseignement ménager' so highly. The emphasis on domestic skills and the segregation

1. La Croix 25 mai 1942
2. QC du Gévauden 4 décembre 1942, no.27, p.406
3. SR de Viviers 11 octobre 1940, no.41, p.392
4. SR du Puy-en-Velay 15 mai 1942, no.33, p.358
of roles for the sexes firmly underlined a girl's future destiny as mother. It was also hoped that 'enseignement ménager' would stem the increasing flow of women who, in the 1930s, had sought independent and professional careers. As La Croix of 18 December 1940 complained, 'Que de fois, en ces dernières années, nous avons entendu gémir les maris et les pères: "Ma femme, ma fille ne savent pas tenir leur ménage! Elles sont incapables de reparer une chausette, même de faire cuire deux œufs sur le plat". ' Those days, it was claimed, were now over. No longer would women seek careers in factories and at the office, but return to 'le foyer' where they would contribute to 'l'enrichissement moral de la famille.'

Vichy itself was deeply impressed by the success of 'enseignement ménager' in Catholic schools. Although housecraft classes were already an established feature in State education, it was not long before 'enseignement ménager' became an integral part of the regime's own programmes for 'general education'. By a law of 5 July 1941 'enseignement ménager agricole' was made compulsory for all girls under the age of seventeen 'qui ne poursuivent pas d'autres études et dont les parents exercent une profession agricole.' This would provide an additional training for all those girls who were destined for a life on

1. La Croix 18 décembre 1940
the land. Yet far more important was the law of 18 March 1942. This made 'enseignement ménager' compulsory for all girls between the ages of fourteen and seventeen in both State and Catholic education.

How did the Church respond to this legislation? Initially, at least, Catholic reaction was favourable. La Croix of 29 May 1942 remarked, 'L'erreur de notre temps a consisté, surtout, à ne pas voir que la femme vraiment intelligente peut accomplir une tâche précise, sans négliger, pour cela, l'attribution de son sexe. C'est cette lacune qu'une récente loi veut combler; désormais, toutes les jeunes filles seront obligatoirement initiées aux travaux du ménage.' Because 'enseignement ménager' was now compulsory, maintained La Croix, the subject would receive a further boost in Catholic schools. Likewise La Semaine Religieuse du Puy-en-Velay commented, 'Le nombre de jeunes filles qui cherchent à se procurer le bénéfice d'un enseignement ménager familial va croissant chaque année; et l'on ne peut que s'en réjouir.' Thus the Church hoped to strengthen its grip on girls' education.

Yet this response soon turned to one of unease. The reason for this disquiet lay with the applicatory 'arrêté' of the law of 18 March 1942 issued on 31 August that same year. In an attempt to guarantee

1. SR du Puy-en-Velay 30 octobre 1942, no.5, p.53
2. La Croix 29 mai 1942
3. SR du Puy-en-Velay 30 octobre 1942, no.5, p.54
4. AN F17 13390, 'Arrêté' of 31 August 1942
standards, this stated that after 1 October 1943 only teachers in possession of a 'diplôme d'enseignement ménager' would be allowed to take the subject. To qualify for this certificate a 'directrice' needed three years experience of 'enseignement ménager' and had to be over thirty five by 1 October 1942. Likewise a 'professeur' required three years' experience, although only needed to be twenty five. In contrast, a 'monitrice' was to be at least twenty one and already in possession of an elementary diploma. Finally, the 'arrêté' announced that requests for the certificate were to be deposited simultaneously with the Academy Inspector and the Délégation Régionale à la Famille by 1 January 1943.

The Church immediately foresaw the dangers inherent in these requirements. Many Catholic teachers, often members of religious orders, possessed no formal qualifications although they might have been involved in the subject for several years. Why now, it was objected, should they require special authorisation by the State? Accordingly, few teachers placed requests for the necessary certificate by 1 January 1943 despite frenetic prompting by the episcopate. Indeed, the Comité de l'Enseignement Libre estimated that in one diocese alone 47 out of 50 Catholic teachers would be out of a job after 1 October 1943 if the law was strictly enforced. To the Church, then, it seemed as though the very structure and independence of 'enseignement ménager' within

1. SR de Lyon 11 décembre 1942, no.3, p.24
2. AN F17 13390, Note of 19 January 1943
Catholic education was under threat. No wonder there was an air of desperation in Catholic appeals to Vichy. On at least two occasions Mgr. Aubry argued to the Ministry of Education that teachers with a minimum number of years' experience should be allowed to teach 'enseignement ménager' irregardless of paper qualifications.'

The strength of these arguments held some sway at Vichy. It had always been the government's intention to oversee the quality of teaching of 'enseignement ménager' in private schools and not to undermine the Church's grip on the subject. In any case, the State possessed insufficient teachers of its own and inadequate financial resources to fill the gap the Church might leave behind. Thus as early as 23 February 1943 Bonnard agreed in principle that experienced Catholic teachers should be permitted to continue their classes. Later on, in an interview of 7 April 1943, Luc, the Director of Technical Education, conceded the same point to Mgr Aubry, although he still advocated that 'monitrices' should obtain the relevant qualifications. As a result a further 'arrêté' appeared for 25 May 1943 granting a number of minor concessions. In future, teachers above the age of

1. AN F17 13390, 'Vœux exprimés par Mgr Aubry à M.le Ministre de l'Education Nationale au cours de son audience du 31 mars 1943', and 'Procès-verbal de l'audience du 7 avril 1943'

2. AN F17 13390, Letter of Bonnard, 23 February 1943

3. AN F17 13390, 'Procès-verbal de l'audience du 7 avril 1943'

4. Details of the 'arrêté' cited in SR de Nîmes 13 juin 1943, no.24, p.162
thirty five and with five years' experience were authorised to teach 'enseignement ménager'. No longer was their position dependent on a certificate delivered by the State. Those with two years' experience were also authorised, but only after they had passed a probationary examination. In turn, these concessions appear to have gone a little way in mollifying the Comité de l'Enseignement Libre. Yet there can be no denying the zeal with which the Church defended the independence of Catholic schools in the face of State encroachments.

Another bitter conflict involving the values of 'la famille' arose out of the question of mixed education. In the eyes of the Church the school was an extension of the family and, as such, was required to maintain the highest standards of morality. Boys and girls needed to be taught separately in different establishments otherwise there was a danger that their youthful innocence would be corrupted in a permissive environment. It was with this fear in mind that on 15 March 1922 the ACA had roundly condemned the principle of co-education. So too did the papacy. In his encyclical of 1929, Divini Illius Magistri, Pius XI described co-education as, 'une erreur pernicieuse à l'éducation chrétienne', and as a, 'méthode fondée sur un naturalisme négateur du péché originel.' Later in 1935 the ACA once more denounced co-education. In an address to the Pope of 19 March the hierarchy promised to do its utmost to preserve the integrity of the school and the French

1. Deroo L'Episcopat Français p.259
2. Ibid
family.'

Given this moral standpoint the Church had been alarmed by the growth of 'écoles géminées' in State education in the 1920s and 1930s. These were not merely mixed schools, but ones that grouped together boys and girls in the same classroom. In theory, at least, they were confined to isolated rural areas. According to the law of 12 February 1933 an 'école géminée' could only be set up in a commune where the school population was insufficient to merit two separate classes for boys and girls.² It was further stipulated that the creation of an 'école géminée' needed the full backing of the municipal and departmental councils. And, finally, the law closely regulated moral standards within the schools themselves. The younger children were to be taught by the 'institutrice' and the elder children by the 'instituteur'. The two teachers had to be a married couple. Yet these safeguards failed to satisfy the Church which alleged that many schools were breaking these conditions. Indeed in 1943 Mgr Rastouil complained that 'la gémination scolaire' had become a common practice in the departments of the Haute Vienne and the Creuse.³ Similarly Mgr Piguet, bishop of Clermont, reported in February 1942 that, 'écoles mixtes et géminées' were

1. Deroo L'Episcopat Français p.259
3. SR de Limoges 30 avril 1943, no.17, pp.142-143
widespread in the Puy-de-Dome.'

In 1940 the Church hoped that such schools would disappear altogether as part of the general restoration of family values. The hierarchy drew great comfort from the declarations of Pétain on education. As Mgr Piguet reflected in October 1942, 'Nous espérions que le renouveau français et l'esprit si nettement défini par le Maréchal, Chef de l'État, pour "l'Education Nationale", dans ses admirables pages publiées le 15 août 1940 dans la RDM, mettraient fin à la gémination dans l'école.' When this hope failed to materialise the Church stepped up its campaign against co-education. On 16/17 June 1942 the ACA for the non-occupied zone denounced the practice. Individual members of the episcopate also took a stand. The bishops of Toulouse, Clermont and Montauban, as well as Cardinal Gerlier at Lyon, all issued statements of condemnation. At Limoges Mgr Rastouil declared on 23 October 1942, 'Mêler des garçons et des filles sur les bancs d'une classe, à longueur de journées, de semaines et de mois, c'est fatalement exposer l'innocence et la vertu de ces enfants: c'est un peu et beaucoup même de "l'atmosphère malsaine dans laquelle ont grandi beaucoup d'ainées",

1. SR de Clermont 3 octobre 1942, no.40, p.341
2. ibid
3. SR de Nîmes 20 juin 1943, no.25, p.166
4. SR de Grenoble 31 décembre 1942, no.20, p.126
5. SR de Montpellier 28 mars 1942, no.13, p.134
In turn, the Church employed several methods to close down 'écoles géminées'. Many bishops organised petitions of protest among Catholic parents. At Montpellier in June 1943 the president of the Associations Catholiques de Chefs de Famille sent out a questionnaire to priests in his diocese. This asked them if they knew of any local complaints about 'écoles géminées' in their area which could then be sent on to the Academy Inspector. Elsewhere priests were urged to ensure that such schools, when they did exist, conformed to the law of 12 February 1933. This involved checking up on pupil numbers; whether or not the school had the approval of the municipal council; and whether the 'instituteur' and 'institutrice' were a respectably married couple. As Mgr Saliège declared in April 1943, it was the grave responsibility of all Catholics to make their opposition to co-education known.

There can be little doubt that Catholic concern was genuine. But nor can it be denied that the Church had ulterior motives in launching its campaign against co-education. It is significant, for instance, that the majority of episcopal statements condemning 'écoles géminées' appeared after the law of 2 November 1941 granting subsidies to Catholic primary

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1. SR de Limoges 23 octobre 1942, no.40, p.374
2. SR de Montpellier 12 juin 1943, no.24, pp.289-290
3. SR de l'Archdiocèse d'Aix 25 avril 1943, no.9, pp.130-131
4. SR de Nîmes 11 avril 1943, no.15, p.111
schools. By closing down the local 'école publique' on the grounds of immorality it was hoped that the nearby 'école privée' would take on the extra pupils and subsequently receive further aid. As will be seen in Chapter Eight, the Church launched a fierce campaign in 1942 to draw students away from State schools. Nonetheless the Church's struggle against the 'écoles géminées' must be judged as a failure. Although Carcopino did prohibit 'classes géminées' in State secondary schools, they remained a common feature in primary education, for two reasons. First, the State possessed insufficient funds to build new schools should 'écoles géminées' be abolished. Secondly, Vichy was unimpressed by the position of moral superiority which the Church had adopted. As a note of 16 January 1942 tersely remarked, the Church itself had 'écoles géminées'. How many of these existed was not known, but a later report of 10 June 1942 calculated that there were 76 'écoles mixtes' in Catholic education.

We may see, therefore, how the example of 'la famille' reveals the differences that could arise between Church and State over 'general education'. At heart, both bodies believed greater emphasis should be placed on family values. This would halt the tide of immorality that had been sweeping through France before the war. Yet the Church

1. SR de Nîmes 9 novembre 1941, no.41, p.504
2. AN F17 13337, Note of 16 January 1942
3. AN F17 13365, Report of 10 June 1942
quickly became alarmed at the measures Vichy adopted to realise this end. For example, the conditions attached to the teaching of 'enseignement ménager' seemed to threaten the long-cherished autonomy of Catholic education. Moreover, the Church was never totally convinced by the concern Vichy expressed over the family. The survival of 'écoles géménées' appeared to indicate that the State cared little for the moral welfare of the young. Nevertheless, even these disagreements look comparatively mild when placed alongside those over sport.

In order to understand these differences it is first necessary to consider the ambivalent position the Church had long since adopted towards the role of sport and physical education in Catholic schools. Doctrinally, at least, the Church subscribed to the doctrine, 'mens sana in corpore sano'. Thus physical education had a part to play in the Christian formation of the young. As La Croix of 1 May 1942 put it, 'Il s'agit d'avoir une âme saine dans un corps sain. Alors l'éducation physique prend sa place, rien que sa place, mais toute sa place; il s'agit d'armer le corps pour mettre à même de fournir son rendement optimum et d'être le serviteur sans défaillance d'une âme virile; il s'agit aussi d'utiliser le corps, solidaire de l'âme, comme facteur d'éducation de celle-ci.' Even so, physical education never managed to secure a firm foothold in the programmes of 'enseignement libre'. To an

1. La Croix 1 mai 1942
extent, this was because the Church lacked the financial resources to build new playing fields and train new teachers. But, more importantly, certain physical exercises and sports were regarded as a threat to morality. As a result, the Church kept a close watch on the development of sports and physical education through the Union Générale Sportive de l'Enseignement Libre (UGSEL). With branches in 72 dioceses this co-ordinated examinations and ruled which games' costumes and exercises were acceptable and which were not. But for the most part the Church preferred to concentrate its sporting activities outside of schools in specialist clubs and gymnastic societies run by priests. These could ensure a closer watch on the young. In turn, these organisations belonged to the Fédération Gymnastique et Sportive des Patronages de France (FGSPF), which enjoyed considerable popularity before the First World War. Between 1905 and 1914 the number of affiliated clubs rose from 72 to 1,763 whereas membership reached a staggering 180,000. Even so, within schools themselves, sports were still relegated to the sidelines of the curriculum.

In 1940 this half-hearted attitude on the part of the Church contrasted sharply with the enthusiasm of the new regime. To many at

1. AN 71 AJ 66, 'Dossier André Philip: rapport du Chanoine Hamayon'
3. See H. Mavit 'Éducation Physique et Sports', in EHDGM no.56, octobre 1964, Numéro Spécial 'Vichy et la Jeunesse', pp.89-102
Vichy military defeat was ample proof that French youth had gone 'soft' and lost the appetite for physical education. To remedy this, on 7 August 1940 Vichy established a Commissariat Général à l'Éducation Générale et aux Sports under the direction of Jean Borotra, the former Wimbledon tennis champion and veteran of the First World War. In the words of a circular of 12 December 1940, the aim of the Commissariat was to make 'un grand effort pour la formation d'une jeunesse saine, au corps harmonieux et au caractère bien trempé.' It quickly set about its task. A circular of 18 November 1940 recommended that 3 to 4 hours a week should be put aside for physical education in primary schools. At the start of 1941, the Commissariat established a Brevet National Sportif for school-leavers. This replaced the Brevet Populaire Sportif which had been created in 1937 by Léo Legrange, the socialist Under-Secretary for Sport and Leisure in the Popular Front government. But in 1941 few were prepared to acknowledge openly such a heritage.

In the face of this renewed zeal for sport the Church itself appeared more enthusiastic. At least the hierarchy could take reassurance from Borotra's early speeches. His belief that sport and physical education were vital elements in character building largely

1. Law of 7 August 1940 in JO 8 août 1940, no.195, p.4656
2. AN F17 13318, Circular of 12 December 1940
3. Circular of 18 November 1940 in Bulletin des Écoles Libres du diocèse de Viviers, included in CR de Viviers 7 février 1941, no.6, pp.44-46
acqured with their own ideas. The Church also supported Borotra in his conviction that the young should compete on an amateur basis. Professionalism, with its ugly lure of financial reward, was seen as fostering an excessive individualism and was considered harmful to the spirit of friendly competition. As La Croix of 1 May 1942 declared, '...chez certains jeunes l'éducation physique apparaît une affaire de championnats et de champions. Une fois encore, le moyen pour intéresser devient fin, et ce serait un malheur que beaucoup de jeunes en retassent à cette conception erronée.' Other Catholics welcomed Vichy's measures, rather as the government had hoped, as a means of rebuilding France. La Semaine Religieuse de Montpellier of 5 April 1941 commented, 'Les bienfaits d'une pratique rationnelle de l'Education physique et des sports ne sont plus à démontrer; chacun sait quel avantage il peut en tirer pour le développement de ses qualités physiques et morales, mais aussi dans l'intérêt de la nation elle-même.' Even members of the hierarchy gave their blessing. In October 1941 Cardinal Gerlier attended part of the annual conference of the FGSPF where he announced, 'J'apporte le témoignage de l'intérêt affectueux que portent vos évêques à votre effort. Nous désirons de tout coeur le développement de la FGSPF

1. Speech of Borotra of 15 August 1940 cited in Le Temps 6 octobre 1940
2. La Croix 1 mai 1942
3. SR de Montpellier 5 avril 1941, no.14, p.162
et qu'on lui laisse la possibilité de continuer sa progression.' And, finally, there were material reasons why the Church became more favourably disposed towards sport and physical education. On 12 December 1940 the State agreed to help communes with up to 80 per cent of the cost of land to be used for sporting facilities. However, as a number of reports commented, this money was not always used for its original purpose and was re-directed to upkeeping the local 'école privée'.

Together, these factors ensured that physical education figured more prominently in Catholic institutions under Vichy. It received a further indirect boost through the law of 2 November 1941 granting subventions to private elementary schools. One of the conditions laid down before a school could receive State aid was that its pupils should sit the CEP, which included an element of physical education in its requirements. Nonetheless, this success should not be exaggerated. Several areas refused to introduce physical education. In October 1943 the Directeur Départemental du Cher de l'Education Générale et des Sports reported fierce opposition on the part of Mgr Lefebvre, the archbishop of

1. La Croix 20 octobre 1941
2. AN F17 13318, Circular of 12 December 1940
3. AN F17 13356, Report of the Academy Inspector of the Loire, 16 April 1943
4. Please see below p.335
Bourges. At Neuilly-sur-Seine a group of Catholic mothers wrote to Bonnard in October 1942 to complain that two local 'collèges' had failed dismally to provide any games facilities. Elsewhere the Church struggled to recruit enough 'moniteurs' and 'monitrices' to supervise physical education. La Semaine Religieuse de Montpellier of 10 May 1941 reported that only two parishes had requested information on a conference for physical education teachers in the diocese. 'L'importance de la question', it continued, 'parait échappé à MM.les Curés et aux Directeurs d'écoles ou de patronages. Nous rappelons une fois de plus que l'Education physique est à l'heure actuelle d'une nécessité absolue.' In the diocese of Carcassonne a number of sessions were organised for the training of Catholic 'moniteurs' in the course of 1942, yet each had to be cancelled due to a lack of support. Likewise La Semaine Religieuse de Viviers of 26 February 1943 reported a feeble response among Catholic 'institutrices'. On a national level, as late as 1944, the Church only possessed two Ecoles Normales d'Education

1. AN F17 13365, Report of the Directeur Départementale du Cher de l'Education Générale et des Sports to the Inspecteur Principal, Directeur Régional pour l'Académie de Paris, 29 October 1943
2. AN F17 13390, Letter of Catholic mothers, Neuilly-sur-Seine, to Bonnard, 1942 (4 November?)
3. SR de Montpellier 10 mai 1941, no.19, p.222
4. SR de Carcassonne 29 novembre 1941, no.47, p.429 and 10 octobre 1942 no.42, p.270
Physique.'

The reluctance of Catholic schools to embrace fully physical education was due to concern over the moral welfare of the young. There was a strong fear that the vogue for sports and games would lead people to forget their religious duties. As Mgr Girbeau, bishop of Nîmes, remarked in February 1941, 'le sport... est devenu pour des milliers de jeunes gens, dans nos villes, comme dans nos campagnes, une religion nouvelle. Pour eux, le stade a remplacé l'église; l'homme qui court, l'homme qui saute, l'homme qui vole, est devenu une sorte de personnage sacro-saint qui accomplit un nouveau sacerdoce.' There was also a worry that this new cult for physical fitness and for the body might corrupt the moral innocence of the young. This fear was most vividly expressed by the papacy itself. In a declaration of 17 February 1942 Pius XII pronounced:

Nous vivons à l'époque de la culture physique et l'on accuse l'Eglise d'attacher trop peu d'importance à celle-ci. Or, l'Eglise n'a jamais condamné ce que les exercices physiques offrent de naturel, de sain et d'utile. Elle favorise elle-même avec profit leur pratique dans les organisations de la jeunesse. Lorsqu'elle affirme que le corps doit être subordonné à l'esprit, elle ne fait qu'élever une digne contre les vagues de la dépravation d'un culte païen de la chair sans âme et sans conscience.

1. AN 71 AJ 66, Dossier André Philip: rapport du Chanoine Hamayon
2. SR de Nîmes 22 février 1941, no.8, p.83
3. AN F17 13321, 'Une déclaration du Souverain Pontife sur l'Education Physique', 17 February 1942
Within France members of the hierarchy took up the same themes. In October 1943 Mgr Lefebvre remarked, 'Avant de demander aux jeunes gens de pratiquer intensivement l'éducation physique pour le seul bénéfice de leur corps, nous voulons d'abord préserver leur âme et les éléver sur le plan moral.' Earlier in 1941 La Croix had declared, 'La France de demain sera plus forte si l'on s'attache dès aujourd'hui à forger le corps des jeunes; mais n'oublions pas le plus important leur forger une âme.'

To protect the innocence of the young the Church laid down a strict code of conduct for those partaking in sports and physical education. The ACA repeatedly ruled against mixed games. In the diocese of Puy-en-Velay, Catholic sports grounds were reserved solely for the use of girls on Tuesdays and Fridays. No men were allowed to participate or even watch. Furthermore, the episcopate laid down strict rules in the matter of dress. As Mgr Saliège declared in 1941, 'Pas de relèvement national sans la prudence.' At Montauban Mgr Théas announced, 'Le corps de l'homme, surtout le corps du jeune homme et de la jeune fille, doit être

1. AN F17 13365, Report of Directeur Départemental du Cher de l'Education Générale et des Sports to L'Inspecteur Principal, Directeur Régional pour l'Académie de Paris, 29 October 1943
2. La Croix 18 mars 1941
3. Declaration of the ACA, February 1942, quoted in La Vie Catholique p.22
5. La Vie Catholique p.22
couvert, même si c'est moins commode et, soi-disant, moins hygiénique. Les intérêts supérieurs de l'âme l'exigent: la chair doit être subordonnée à l'esprit, et, depuis le péché original, ce n'est point facile.' Accordingly, the ACA banned girls from certain physical exercises and from wearing shorts. Instead they were to wear a short skirt and a light tunic designed by the FGSPF.® La Croix of 28 June 1941 gave detailed information on what attire was permissible.® Catholic teachers, too, had to follow rigorous dress regulations. This created particular problems for female teaching orders. In March 1943 the Supérieure Générale des Franciscaines Servantes de Marie wrote to Bonnard to enquire whether nuns presenting themselves for examinations in physical instruction could be excused certain exercises because of the unsuitability of their religious dress and be allowed to take a course in theory instead.®

At times the Church's lack of enthusiasm for sports could give rise to ridicule and anticlericalism, particularly on the part of sportsmen themselves. An incident at Les Sables d'Olonne in the Vendée serves as a good example.® Here, on 20 June 1943, a 'journée

1. OR de Digne 7 mai 1942, no.9, p.110
2. SR du Puy-en-Velay 25 février 1944, no.22, pp.234-236
3. La Croix 28 juin 1941
4. AN F17 13365, Letter of M. F... B..., Supérieure des Franciscaines Servantes de Marie (Blois) to Bonnard, 31 March 1943
5. AN F17 13390, Letter of Frère E... to Bonnard, 12 October 1943. Attached are a number of eye-witness accounts.
d'athlétisme' was organised by the local sports society. It was attended by a variety of people, including children from both Catholic and State schools as well as a number of national athletes. One of these duly used the occasion to berate and mock the Church for its lack of involvement in sport. According to one eye-witness account he offended Catholics in the audience by speaking of the altar as one of the obstacles in the 110 metres hurdles; the monstrance as a football; the bishop's cross as a pole vault; and holy oil as massage cream for athletes. At this point in the talk the local Catholic physical education teacher stormed out of the hall taking his pupils with him. Clearly episodes like this were rare, but the fact that they came to the attention of Bonnard is a reflection of the importance Vichy attached to the attitude of the Church.

Certainly by the summer of 1943 the Church was becoming increasingly worried about State involvement in the organisation of physical education in Catholic schools. This concern largely arose out of a change-over of power at Vichy's Commissariat. In April 1942, the Germans, long-since hostile to Borotra on account of his anti-Nazi sentiments, finally secured his dismissal. His replacement was Colonel Pascot, a colleague of Borotra's and former rugby international. While many of the policies he pursued were similar to Borotra's, he wanted to extend the scope of the Sports Charter of 20 December 1940. This had grouped sports clubs into federations, each one of these representing the major sports. In turn, these federations belonged to the
Comité National des Sports. Now in 1943 Pascot wanted to increase the power of this organisation by making it impossible for any club to operate outside of its federal structure, an idea previously rejected by Borotra. It was also vigorously opposed by the ACA meeting in April 1943. The episcopate feared for the independence of their own sporting organisations, UGSEL and FGSPF (recently rechristianed UGSPF, the Union Gymnastique et Sportive des Patronages de France), which had so far managed to remain outside of the Sports Charter. In a number of letters of protest of May 1943, Mgr Chappoulie made known to the regime the nature of the Church's opposition. In one letter of 12 May, he expressed fears that the Christian purpose of sport would be lost if UGSEL came under any form of State control. En effet', wrote Chappoulie, 'l'UGSPF n'a pas eu le souci du sport pour le sport, mais elle a cherché à assurer, à côté du développement corporel, celui de l'individu tout entier. Dans le sport et par le sport elle s'est toujours efforcée d'établir le sens de l'honneur, de l'énergie, de grandir chez ses adhérents l'amour des valeurs morales et spirituelles.' What Chappoulie did not mention, but was at the back of his mind, was the belief that Vichy was becoming increasingly dominated by the Germans and was in danger of establishing a 'jeunesse unique' reared

1. AN 2 AG 492 CC73 B, 'Note relative aux organisations sportives de l'enseignement catholique secondaire et supérieur', 4 May 1943
2. AN 2 AG 492 CC73 B, Letter of Chappoulie to Lavagne, 12 May 1943
on the Nazi conceptions of race and the cult of the body. Such a frightening prospect hardened the opposition of the Church which ultimately resisted Vichy's plans to incorporate the UGSPF and UGSEL into a State organisation.

To conclude, we have been conscious throughout of how the Church jealously guarded the independence of Catholic schools in the face of Vichy's initiatives on 'general education'. Although the episcopate was prepared to influence State education and attempted to fashion it in a Catholic design, the hierarchy was far less happy to allow the government to interfere in the programmes of 'enseignement libre'. As we have seen, in the case of sport and 'enseignement ménager', this opposition could be quite out-spoken. But in the long-run this resistance worked in the Church's favour. Many parents became worried by the inclusion of non-academic subjects like physical education in the lessons of the State school and moved their children to a Catholic school instead. There, it was believed, their offspring would receive a more serious upbringing. As we will see in Chapter Nine, this was one of the underlying reasons behind the rapid growth of private schools during the Occupation. In any case, the Church was never convinced that it needed to introduce such a broad programme of 'general education' as it believed that it taught the same values through the catechism. But, in respect to religious instruction, Vichy had already let the Church down. Indeed, after the rescinding of Chevalier's legislation on the catechism, whatever the government attempted to do to infuse a
sense of morality among the young would be regarded as painfully insufficient and ultimately bound to fail.
Chapter Six

LES EDUCATEURS CATHOLIQUES

Part Three

TEACHERS

Military defeat frequently prompted new regulations aimed at strengthening the nation. In the case of France in both 1870 and 1812, the former defeated hero, Napoleon, was not among the ranks of Catholic educators. But in particular, the religious orders. In contrast to the majority of the Prussian teachers, priests such as the Jesuits were able to keep alive the spirit of French youth in a state of resistance. According to Sisson, "L'église tient en main les écoles par les congrégations qui préparent les jeunes Français à faire leur devoir patriatrique; elle leur enseigne l'ouverture et le respect des lois naturelles..." In his book, Intellectuals of France in 1871, Burde questioned whether French thought on the encyclical-Catholicism or Jesuit education could compete with the efficient techniques of Prussia. Since both Catholic teachers had examined pedagogically deficient and were taught to compete only with the State's more-superior qualified "teachers."

In 1940, however, these rules were reversed. Now, the term of the State "institute's" to be blamed for the defeat. They were...

Military defeat frequently produces the need for scapegoats. This was the case in France in both 1870 and 1940. In the former 'débâcle' the culprits were found among the ranks of Catholic schoolteachers, in particular the religious orders. In contrast to the modernity of the Prussian master, orders such as the Jesuits were held to have kept French youth in a state of ignorance. As Gambetta claimed, 'L'éducation dispensée par les congrégations a mal préparé les jeunes Français à faire leur devoir patriotique; elle les a mal armés pour la compétition entre les nations modernes.' In his Réforme Intellectuelle et Morale de la France (1871), Renan questioned whether Frenchmen brought up on the unscientific mythologies of Jesuit schools could compete with the efficient technicians of Prussia. Since then, in the eyes of many, Catholic teachers had remained pedagogically deficient and were thought to compare badly with the State's own better-qualified 'instituteurs'.

In 1940, however, these roles were reversed. This time it was the turn of the State 'instituteurs' to be blamed for the defeat. They were

1. R. Rémond L'Anti Cléricalisme en France de 1815 à nos jours (Paris, Fayard, 1976) p.177
accused of a secularism and an anti-patriotism that had sapped the inner-strength of France. Conversely the religious orders were held in high esteem. According to La Croix of 19 November 1940, 'Tout le monde reconnaissait le dévouement quasi-illimité des maîtres et maitresses de l'enseignement libre.' It was they who had remained true to the traditional French values of God, work, family and country.

In return for this unswerving devotion the Church did not expect the religious orders to go unrewarded. They had much to gain from a relaxation of the mass of restrictive legislation governing their existence. This included, of course, the law of 30 October 1886 which had excluded religious orders from teaching in State schools. Yet it was the two so-called 'lois d'exception', dating from the turn of the century, that most rankled Catholics. For Abbé Renaud, writing in La Revue des Deux Mondes of 1 August 1939, the reform of this legislation was the key issue in the schools question.²

The first of these laws was that of Waldeck-Rousseau of 1 July 1901. This established the right of association, but drew a distinction between religious orders and other bodies. The latter were allowed the freedom of formation and had no need to make a declaration unless they wanted civil status. Yet according to Titre III of the law religious

1. La Croix 19 novembre 1940
2. Abbé Renaud 'Pour une Politique Religieuse', in RDM, 1 août 1939, pp.639-668
orders enjoyed no such liberty of action.' Article 13 declared that a religious order could only exist or a new order be founded by virtue of a special law approved by a vote of parliament. Likewise an order could only set up a new establishment by approval of a decree rendered by the Conseil d'Etat. Article 14 prevented members of non-authorised orders from teaching. The penalties for contravention of these articles were severe. Any non-authorised order was illegal and individual membership of it could be punished by a fine of up to 5000F or a term of imprisonment between six days to a year. Those orders whose demands for recognition were rejected, or those 'congrégations réfractaires' which did not seek authorisation, were to be dissolved and their wealth confiscated.

Naturally the Church bitterly resented the above dispositions. Catholics believed that religious orders should be subject to 'le droit commun' and thus be allowed to associate freely like any other French citizen. As Auguste Rivet, the doyen of the Faculté Catholique de Droit at Lyon, reflected in 1943, the aim of the legislation had been less to establish the freedom of association, than to submit religious orders to a draconian police regime. In fact, Waldeck-Rousseau had

1. Articles of Titre III of the law of 1 July 1901 may be found in P. Sauret Répertoire des Congrégations légalement reconnues et de leurs établissements autorisés (Paris, P. Lethielleux, 1939) pp. 156-158

devised the law in a spirit of leniency.' He believed that in submitting religious orders to a legislative authorisation they would thereby possess the security of a legal existence. Certainly he had no wish to use the law against all of the 3,216 different religious orders that existed in France in 1901; only those politically suspect like the Assumptionists. Important teaching orders like the Frères des Écoles Chrétiennes, which had received authorisation before 1901, were to remain unaffected.

The same could not be said of Emiles Combes, who succeeded Waldeck-Rousseau in June 1902. A provincial radical and hardened anticlerical, Combes wanted to reduce significantly clerical influence within education. Consequently, he applied the law of 1901 far more vigorously than Waldeck-Rousseau. By October 1903 he had closed down some 10,000 schools run by religious orders. Yet for Combes even this was not enough. If possible, he wanted to curtail their teaching activities to an absolute minimum.

The outcome was the second great 'loi d'exception' of 7 July 1904.


2. Prost Histoire de l'Enseignement p.206

This forbade members of religious orders from teaching altogether whatever particular order they belonged to. Their houses were to be shut down and the orders themselves dissolved. All that they were permitted to retain were their novitiates and teacher-training staff for French schools abroad, in the colonies and in countries under protectorate. Consequently, of some 8,200 confessional schools, 1,843 were closed down between 1904 and 1911. In other words, Combes had succeeded in dissolving one in three of the schools run by religious orders. It was a disappointing result. While in the face of this persecution, some orders had fled abroad, others had openly defied the law or simply skirted round it by abandoning their religious robes and by continuing to teach in civilian dress. As Le Temps of 7 September 1940 put it, 'Une soutane noire remplaçait le blanc vêtement.' But by 1914 they had little to fear. The 'Union Sacrée' of the Great War brought with it the Circulaire Malvy of 2 August 1914. This instructed prefects 'à suspendre exécution décrets, ou fermeture ou refus autorisation pris par application loi 1901 et arrêtés fermeture pris en exécution desdites lois.' Thereafter the 'lois d'exception' remained on the statute books but few

1. Dansette Histoire Religieuse Vol 2 p.312
2. Larkin Church and State p.100
3. Le Temps 7 septembre 1940
4. Circulaire Malvy. 2 August 1914, quoted in Rivet Traité des Congrégations p.41
governments other than the overtly anticlerical Cartel des Gauches of 1924 ever thought of reinforcing them.

Because so many religious orders continued to teach outside of the law, it is difficult to know with any precision how many existed in France in the inter-war period. One estimate has suggested that by 1938 they taught at least 15 per cent of all children in Church primary schools and as many as 47 per cent in Church secondary schools. Within elementary education the most important order remained the Frères des Ecoles Chrétienes. Originally they had been badly hit by the law of 1904, but their surviving schools had been saved at the last moment by the Circulaire Malvy. Although they no longer taught the 203,760 pupils they had in 1901, by 1944 some 4,000 brothers maintained 410 schools instructing 80,000 pupils. In secondary education, the most influential order continued to be the Jesuits. Supposedly, they had already been dissolved in France by the decree of 29 March 1880. But the Jesuits were long-since accustomed to avoiding the rigours of State controls. The laws of 1901 and 1904 proved no different. As early as 1928 they had re-opened all of their schools closed at the turn

1. J. McManners Church and State in France 1870-1914 (London, SPCK, 1972) p.xxiv
2. AN 2 AG 82 SP 10 E 'Note relative à l'Institut des Frères des Ecoles Chrétienes et à sa demande de reconnaissance légale', no date
3. AN 2 AG 128 SP60 A, Le Petit Journal 25 janvier 1944
of the century and had residences in over fifty dioceses.'

Although several orders continued to teach after 1914, they did so in a state of insecurity and uncertainty. The election of the Cartel des Gauches sharply underlined the vulnerability of their position. At the same time, there appeared to be little chance of securing the repeal of the laws of 1901 and 1904. If a majority of deputies had no desire to implement the legislation, nor did they wish to modify it. The 'lois d'exception' had rapidly become 'lois intangibles', touchstones of 'laïcité'. The extent to which deputies were committed to them was clearly illustrated in 1928 when not even the authority of Poincaré could secure the legal authorisation of a handful of missionary orders. Similarly in Spring 1939, two separate attempts to modify the laws governing the orders met with failure. The first, and more ambitious of these proposals, was that of Eugène Pébellier, a deputy from the Haute-Loire. This advocated the abolition of the law of 1904 and a relaxation of that of 1901 in the interests of French missionary orders whose numbers were rapidly diminishing. The second proposal,

1. 'Une liste des congrégations d'hommes rentrées en France sans autorisation', in Europe Nouvelle 10 novembre 1928
3. Rivet Traité des Congrégations p.44. Also see J-M. Mayeur 'La Politique Religieuse', in Edouard Daladier p.250 et seq.
backed by Edmond Miellet, a deputy from Belfort, and Abbé Polimann, deputy for the Meuse, had the more limited aim of lifting teaching restrictions on those individual members of orders who had taught in the last war. Yet both proposals failed to command majority support, especially among the deputies of the centre right many of whom remained committed to the ideals of 'laïcité'. This failure came as no surprise to the Church. Earlier in January 1939 Cardinal Verdier had gloomily reflected, 'La France n'a pas changé un iota de sa législation anticlérical et laïque... ses dirigeants n'osent pas prononcer le nom de Dieu.'

The coming of the war, however, quickly re-opened the issue on two fronts. First, there was an influx of refugee orders from Alsace-Lorraine where, of course, the Republican secularist legislation had never been enforced. Second, the call-up of several lay teachers led to their places being filled by members of religious orders, many of whom had come out of retirement having rummaged through their wardrobes for their religious dress. This soon led to friction. For

1. Marteaux L'Eglise de France Vol 2, p.408
example, *L'Ecole Libératrice* of 13 April 1940 reported the case of a Catholic school at Raucher in the Sarthe where the place of the mobilized teacher had been taken up by three old brothers of the Frères de la Doctrine Chrétienne. The Academy Inspector had duly intervened to enforce the law of 1904, only to provoke a storm of criticism in the Catholic press. Similarly, in the neighbouring department of the Maine-et-Loire the prefect had intervened to stop the Frères des Écoles Chrétiennes from re-opening a school at Teloche, but had been forced to back down on his decision after Catholic protests.

Incidents like these called for a clear ruling. The secularists hoped that the government would reinforce the 1904 legislation. The SNI saw no reason why the law should be flouted in time of war. For the Church, Cardinal Verdier argued that the government should abolish all restrictive legislation governing the teaching orders in a gesture of

1. AN F17 13390 Press cutting from *L'Ecole Libératrice* 13 avril 1940
3. AN F17 13390, Press cutting from *L'Ecole Libératrice* 13 avril 1940
reconciliation.' Yet no such resolution was forthcoming. A report by the Directeur de l'Enseignement du Premier Degré of 4 April 1940 claimed that the problem was not his to solve; instead it was the responsibility of the Minister of Education in consultation with the government. A fortnight later a memorandum for the Minister admitted that the problem was 'délicate', but confessed that in the circumstances there were insufficient texts to make a clear ruling. Stranded on the sandbanks of legal niceties, the government found itself washed over by the tide of events.

The arrival of Vichy again offered new promise of a solution. The regime quickly demonstrated its good will towards the religious orders. By a special law of 21 February 1941 the contemplative order of the Chartreux were granted legal recognition. The first male order to have

1. AN 2 AG 492 CC72 A, Mémoire à Consulter pour une Politique Religieuse de l'Etat, 17 October 1940, p.21
2. AN F17 13390, note from the Directeur de l'Enseignement du Premier Degré to the Minister of Education, 4 April 1940
3. AN F17 13390, 'Aide-Mémoire pour M.le Président Sarraut sur les relations avec l'enseignement privé (premier degré)', 17 April 1940
received legal recognition in nearly forty years, this move provided great encouragement to the Church.' This hope was well-founded. Pétain himself was especially disposed towards the religious orders. After all, as the Catholic press was forever recalling, Pétain had been the pupil of the Dominicans. What better proof was there, it was enquired, of the worth of congregational teaching? In February 1941 La Semaine Religieuse de Belley quoted one of Pétain's former teachers who in May 1917 had modestly remarked, 'Si je n'avais grondé Philippe, nous n'avions peut-être pas Pétain.' Another evocation of the value of religious orders came from Albert Rivaud in two articles for La Revue des Deux Mondes. In the first of these, 'Vers une Ecole Nouvelle', published in September and October of 1940, he wrote, 'Les grands ordres enseignant ont obéi à

1. Although in part a gesture of reconciliation, the law was also a measure of expediency. When in 1903 the Chartreux were banished from France, the majority of the monks took refuge at Farnetta in Italy. This caused them some embarrassment in 1940 when Mussolini declared war on France. Refusing to take an oath of loyalty to the Duce, they returned to French territory. On 8 June their procureur-général asked the Ministry of the Interior for permission to re-open their old monastery of the Grande-Chartreuse in the Isère, a move supported by the Vatican. After some hesitation the Interior proved favourable and on 21 June the Chartreux were allowed to re-install themselves at their former home. This decision was, however, highly irregular. Not possessing a legal existence, the order was not entitled to occupy national property. It was thus left to Vichy to regularise their situation through the special law of 21 February 1941. See Latreille De Gaulle, La Libération et l'Église Catholique pp.82-84. For a commentary on the law of 21 February 1941, see Rivet Traité des Congrégations p.45

2. SR de Belley 13 février 1941, no.7, p.47
la parole du Christ ordonnant de propager la vérité." In his second article of November 1941, 'L'Avenir de l'Enseignement Libre', he took this praise a step further. In this, he recounted the educative role of the Jesuits and the Frères des Ecoles Chrétiennes from the seventeenth century to the present. It was they, not 'les écoles officielles' of the State, he concluded, which had laid the foundations of 'la civilisation française.'

But while Vichy was favourably disposed towards the religious orders, what policy was envisaged in their regard? The Church wanted to see the abrogation of the restrictive legislation of 1901 and 1904. This was made clear by the ACA meeting at Lille in August 1940. But for Vichy this was moving too fast. The defeat had come too quickly to resurrect relics of the 'Union Sacrée'. Instead, the regime preferred to bide its time by offering more moderate concessions. The most important of these was to return to the religious orders the right to teach. Not only would this restore a basic human right, it would also regularise the position of all those orders which had returned during the 'drôle de guerre'. But, at the same time, Vichy did not want to relinquish all form of State control. While the question of authorisation would require

1. A.Rivaud, 'Vers Une Ecole Nouvelle', in RDM, 1 septembre 1940 and 1 Octobre 1940, p.227
2. A.Rivaud, 'L'Avenir de l'Enseignement Libre', in RDM 15 novembre 1941, pp.129-147
modification, it should not be completely abandoned. Like every
government since the ancien régime, Vichy wanted to retain some form of
regulatory control.

This reasoning led to the law of 3 September 1940. This abolished
outright the law of 7 July 1904 which had forbidden religious orders
from teaching. At the same time, it abrogated Article 14 of the law of
1 July 1901 which had prevented members of non-authorised orders from
teaching.¹ This returned to the congregations as individuals the right
to teach in the same conditions as any other French citizen, something
which they had been doing in any case since 1914. What it did not do was
release them of the obligation to seek legal authorisation. Thus, those
orders like the Frères des Ecoles Chrétiennes, which had lost their
legal existence in 1904, still had to seek authorisation if they wanted
to continue to teach and remain within the law.² For the moment at least
Vichy was not prepared to countenance any further concessions to the
1901 legislation.

Apart from the outstanding question of authorisation, the Church
enthusiastically welcomed the law of 3 September 1940. Mgr. Couderc,
bishop of Viviers, remarked, 'justice est enfin rendue.'³ More

1. Law of 3 September 1940 in JO 4 septembre 1940, no.222, p.4889
2. AN F17 13390, This decision was clarified by a meeting of the
Conseil d'Etat, 4 September 1941. Also see Latreille De Gaulle, La
Libération et l'Eglise Catholique. p.82
3. SR de Viviers 13 septembre 1940, no.37, p.360
flamboyantly, in October 1940 Chanoine Aimond pronounced, 'après quatre-vingt-dix ans d'activité ininterrompue au service de la France et de la jeunesse française, en ces heures de redressement national, l'enseignement libre fièrement répond à l'appel du chef de l'Etat, lui-même son ancien et illustre élève: "Présent".' La Croix of 6 September 1940 wrote, 'En prenant cette décision, le gouvernement a accompli un geste de concorde et d'apaisement à l'égard des catholiques français.' Likewise La Semaine Catholique de St-Flour of 12 September 1940 thanked the government for its generosity. Yet, as Jules Jeanheney remarked in his diary, for others this was a moment of revenge on the past. La Semaine Religieuse de Nîmes of 8 September 1940 commented that it had never known a law more hypocritical or more cynical than that of 1904. 'Qu'un grand pays comme le nôtre,' it continued, 'ait pu le tolérer si longtemps restera pour les historiens futurs un sujet d'étonnement.' For La Semaine Religieuse de Valence of 21 September 1940, it was the occasion to recite a huge list of orders and their schools that had been banished from the Drôme. It recalled bitterly that almost all Catholic boys' schools in the department had been closed.

1. SR d'Aix 20 octobre 1940, no.42, p.425
2. La Croix 6 septembre 1940
3. SC de St-Flour 12 septembre 1940, no.37, p.302
5. SR de Nîmes 8 septembre 1940, no.34, p.368
6. SR de Valence 21 septembre 1940, no.37, p.455
down and reproached the public for not having come to their support at a
moment of national crisis.

How did the religious orders themselves react to the law of 3
September 1940? For some it was a time of rejoicing. At the start of
1940, one monk wrote from the Auvergne, 'Je vous exprime enfin ma joie
de voir abroger les lois de 1901 et 1904... Je suis heureux, infiniment
heureux et fier d'avoir lutté pour une cause si noble, si juste.' Yet
others were more reserved. Long since accustomed to the minutiae of
State controls, the religious orders had acquired an inbuilt suspicion
of governmental intervention, whatever the good intentions and religious
complexion of the regime. Thus, while they welcomed the lifting of the
prohibition on congregational teaching, they were disappointed that no
concessions had been made on the question of authorisation.

This view was most forcibly expressed by the Ligue des Droits des
Religieux Anciens Combattants (DRAC). Founded on 4 August 1924 by two
relatively unknown war heroes - dom Moreau, a Benedictine monk, and
Daniel-Michel Bergey, a 'curé' from St.Emilion - the original purpose
of DRAC had been to mobilize support among war veterans of the regular
clergy against the possibility of the Cartel des Gauches re-enforcing
the 'lois d'exception'. Having fought for their country, the members of
DRAC believed their reward should be to enjoy the same liberties as any
other French citizen - that religious orders should be allowed to

1. AN 2 AG 79 SP6, no.11. Letter of monk to DRAC février/mars 1941
2. Mgr. Théas Livre d'Or des Congrégations Françaises 1939-1945 (Paris,
   DRAC, 1948) p.13
associate freely. This belief was embodied in the motto: 'Egaux comme au
front.' After the threat of the Herriot government had passed, DRAC
continued its struggle holding regular reunions of superiors from a wide
range of orders, among them the Dominicans, Jesuits, Oblats de Marie
Immaculée and Frères du St. Vincent de Paul. At one of these conferences,
of 22 December 1938, DRAC reaffirmed its aim as, 'la reconnaissance des
libertés individuelles des Religieux Anciens Combattants et de leurs
droits civiques rendues plus incontestables que jamais par leur
loyalisme au service du pays.' To mobilize public support for this
campaign, DRAC founded a youth movement, Jeunes DRAC, which under Vichy
became part of the Equipes et Cadres de la France Nouvelle. Yet while
the membership of DRAC continued to rise to over 50,000 by 1951, its
real driving force remained among the ranks of the militant regular
clergy, particularly Jesuits who had fought in the First World War.

Having campaigned for sixteen years without success, the advent of
Vichy offered DRAC new promise. Quick off the mark was Moreau himself
who wrote to Pétain on 16 July 1940 calling for the abrogation of the
law of 1904 and Titre III of the law of 1901. Having fought for their
country in both 1914 and 1939, he argued, the religious orders should no

1. AN 2 AG 79 SP6 no.11, Statutes contained in DRAC février/mars 1941
2. AN 2 AG 79 SP6 no.11, Bulletin no. 1 d'Information et de Critique
Spring 1941 (journal of Equipes et Cadres de la France Nouvelle)
3. AN 2 AG 618 MP 5 Ancien 24, Letter of Moreau to Pétain, 16 July
1940
longer be discriminated against. Instead, they should enjoy 'le droit commun' and be allowed to associate freely like any other civilian organisation. Accordingly, DRAC could only bring itself to give sparing praise to the law of 3 September 1940. In an open letter of February 1941, boldly entitled 'DRAC continue', Moreau told his members that while their efforts were beginning to be rewarded, much remained to be done. 'Malgré leur volonté', he wrote, 'le Maréchal ni son Ministre n'ont pu encore publier l'abrogation officielle du Titre III de la loi du 1er juillet 1901 pour nous rendre le droit de nous associer, d'hériter, de posséder comme tous les Français.' It was still necessary, concluded Moreau, for DRAC to remain on its guard in order to ensure that its good work was not undone by those who opposed the 'vrai renouveau de la France.' Already the religious orders were suspicious of Vichy's goodwill.

Certainly the regime's projected modifications to the law of 1901 did not go as far as DRAC would have wished. These had been drawn up by the Ministry of Justice on 18 and 20 January 1941. Present had been Pierre Sauret, Director of Cults at the Ministry of the Interior, and Dayras, secretary general of the Ministry of Justice. First, they proposed that it should no longer be an offence for a congregation to

1. AN 2 AG 79 SP6 no.11, Letter of Moreau in DRAC février-mars 1941
2. AN 2 AG 493 CC75 B, 'Histoire Succinct de la Question des Congrégations Depuis l'Armistice', by Frère M..., 18 July 1941
exist as a non-authorised order, although these would still be able to obtain legal recognition. This, in turn, would regularise the position of all those orders that had continued to teach since 1914. Second, legal recognition itself, or the suppression of an establishment belonging to an order, would only be carried through on the unanimous decision of the Conseil d'Etat. No longer would the fate of an order be at the mercy of a 'political' vote of a Chamber of Deputies, something to which the Church had always objected. And, finally, it was recommended that those orders which had originally been dissolved and since obtained legal recognition should be allowed to reclaim their property, or whatever was left of it and not been liquidated.

In many ways, these concessions were extremely generous, especially as they had come from the Ministry of the Interior, long since a stronghold of State neutrality. Although the government had retained the right of granting recognition, orders would be subject to a form of control little different to that enjoyed by other associations. In this sense Vichy had come a step closer to granting religious orders the 'droit commun' they demanded. Yet for the militants of DRAC one step was not enough. They made their objections known at a conference of superiors held at Lyon on 18 April 1941. Here they expressed disquiet that Vichy's proposals left uncertain the fate of those orders which did

1. AN 2 AG 493 CC75 E, 'Histoire Succinct de la Question des Congrégations Depuis l'Armistice', by Frère M... , 18 July 1941
not seek or obtain State recognition. It was feared that these would still be denied the right of a legal existence. Nor was the conference happy that the dissolution of an order would be decided by the Conseil d'Etat. For some the Conseil d'Etat was thought to be too susceptible to political influence - 'pénétré des idées de '89' - whereas others were worried that there were no limits to the reasons it could invoke to dissolve a congregation. Instead, DRAC believed that a religious order, like any other association, should only be dissolved by a decision of the courts.

To remedy these weaknesses the conference drew up a set of counter-proposals. These embodied all the main points of the Interior's scheme with two important additions. Firstly, to safeguard the position of those orders which did not seek, or failed to obtain, legal recognition, DRAC proposed that these should still be able to constitute themselves like an association. Only then, it was argued, would religious orders begin to feel the benefits of 'le droit commun'. Secondly, to limit the powers of the Conseil d'Etat DRAC advocated that the dissolution of a religious order should only take place when, 'une congrégation viendrait à manquer gravement soit à ses statuts soit à l'ordre public, après un (ou deux) avertissement resté sans effet, un décret rendu sur avis conforme du Conseil d'Etat pourrait prononcer le

1. AN 2 AG 493 CC75 B, Letter of Frère M... to Général Laure, 27 February 1942
2. AN 2 AG 493 CC75 B, 'Histoire Succinct de la Question des Congrégations depuis l'Armistice', by Frère M..., 18 July 1941
retrait de la reconnaissance légale." Moreover, 'ce décret pourra être l'objet d'un recours de plein contentieux devant le Conseil d'État qui aura qualité pour apprécier au fond toutes les circonstances de la cause; le recours aura un effet suspensif et sera soumis à une procédure d'urgence.' And, finally, DRAC added the proviso that these proposals were the absolute minimum it would accept. They were only to be viewed as a temporary solution until a definitive statute for the religious orders could be agreed.

On 11 May 1941 DRAC forwarded these demands to the government.\(^2\) While they drew a negative response from the Ministry of the Interior, they did win some support from the new Minister of Justice, Joseph Barthélémy. A fervent Catholic and professor of constitutional law, Barthélémy's opposition to the law of 1901 was well known. 'Le législateur n'avait pas voulu faire une loi sur les Associations', he remarked, 'mais bien plutôt une loi contre les congrégations.'\(^3\) But because he had not been appointed Minister until 13 January 1941, it appears that he had taken little or no part in the meetings of 18 and 20 January establishing the government's proposals. Consequently, he was

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1. AN 2 AG 493 CC75 B, 'Histoire Succinct de la Question des Congrégations depuis l'Armistice', by Frère M..., 18 July 1941

2. ibid

3. AN 2 AG 493 CC75 B, 'Note sur la Question des Congrégations Religieuses', 1 July 1941
enthusiastic to see the inclusion of DRAC's amendments.' Yet overcoming the obduracy of the Ministry of the Interior was another matter. There he had to contend first with the anticlericalism of Darlan and then the opposition of Pucheu, who replaced Darlan as Minister on 18 July 1941. Both men believed that the Interior had been generous enough already. 'Exhorbitante' was how Pucheu described to Darlan the original proposals of January 1941. Ultimately, Barthélémy was out-maneouvred. In a letter of 11 September 1941 Pucheu proposed putting the resolution of the matter to Darlan as Vice-Président du Conseil. Hardly the most impartial of arbitrators, it came as little surprise that on 21 November 1941 Darlan ruled in Pucheu's favour.

In the meantime, the religious orders had become increasingly frustrated by the Interior's lack of response, or 'inaptitude' as DRAC preferred to call it. This led DRAC to try a different

1. AN 2 AG 492 CC73 E, Letter of Barthélémy to Darlan, 16 May 1941
2. AN 2 AG 492 CC73 E, Letter of Pucheu to Darlan, 11 September 1941
3. AN 2 AG 492 CC73 E, Letter of Pucheu to Barthélémy, 11 September 1941
4. AN 2 AG 492 CC73 E, Letter of Darlan to Pucheu and Barthélémy, 21 November 1941
5. AN 2 AG 493 CC75 B, 'Histoire Succinct de la Question des Congrégations depuis l'Armistice', by Frère M..., 18 July 1941
approach. At a second conference of Superiors held at Lyon on 1 July 1941 it was decided to make a direct appeal to Pétain himself. Ignoring the original proposals of the Ministry of the Interior, DRAC recommended the creation of a special commission to look into the problem. It would be charged with finding 'une solution de justice basée sur le droit commun.' To ensure this DRAC carefully specified the composition of the commission. This was to comprise a large number of pro-Catholic lawyers, or 'juristes compétentes et sages, libres de préjugés désuets et exempts des passions politiques' as DRAC described them. Among possible candidates were recommended: Auguste Rivet, Vice-Président de la Conférence des Bâtonniers des Départements, doyen de la Faculté Libre de Lyon; Antoine Lestra, doctor in law and President of the Société Nationale d'Education; and Achille Mentre, professor of law at the University of Paris. On the other hand, the commission was not to include any freemasons. By this DRAC effectively meant Sauret and Dayras who had drawn up the Interior's draft proposals of January 1941. Weighted in this way, it was clear from the onset that DRAC intended to tilt the balance of the commission in its favour.

1. AN 2 AG 493 CC75 B, Letter of DRAC to Pétain, 1 July 1941
2. AN 2 AG 493 CC75 B, 'Histoire Succinct de la Question des Congrégations depuis l'Armistice', by Frère M..., 18 July 1941
3. AN 2 AG 493 CC75 B, Letter of DRAC to Pétain, 1 July 1941
4. ibid
This appeal to Pétain proved as unsuccessful as DRAC's earlier approach to the Ministry of the Interior. While pro-clerical, the Marshal's Cabinet Civil had considerable misgivings about dealing with DRAC. These reservations were made clear in a memorandum of 8 August 1941. First and foremost, this questioned the wisdom of dealing with a veterans' organisation which it doubted spoke for the majority of male orders. Coercion, it was alleged, was the only way that DRAC managed to obtain the support of so many Superiors. Instead, any negotiations about the future of the religious orders should take place through the proper channels, that is with the Nonciature. Secondly, the note took exception to the rebellious attitude that DRAC adopted towards the State. 'La DRAC semble animée', it remarked, 'd'une intransigeance partisane assez importante et d'une sorte de philosophie de la rébellion contre les pouvoirs civils qui est dangereux.' And, finally, the note was dismissive of DRAC's demands to be treated under 'le droit commun'. What it really wanted was to be free of any sort of State control. 'En réalité', it was concluded, 'la DRAC ne veut pas "le droit commun" dont probablement elle ne connaît même la règle. Avec un fâcheux sectarisme de combat elle revendique sous le nom de "droit commun" des privilèges exorbitantes que jamais nos rois les plus pieux n'auraient songé à lui abandonner, dont aucune sorte de groupement n'a joué et qui, au bout de peu de temps, entraîneraient des conséquences aussi...

1. AN 2 AG 492 CC73 E, 'Note à propos des revendications de la DRAC', 8 August 1941
préjudiciables pour notre intérêt national et l'ordre intérieur que pour les congrégations elles-mêmes.'

Such home-truths were not, however, for DRAC's own consumption. In a polite and measured response of 2 August 1941, Lavagne thanked DRAC for its proposals for a special commission and remarked that the questions posed were at the 'premier rang' of Pétain's preoccupations. But, he continued, the problems involved were highly delicate legal matters which could only be decided after careful negotiations with the Nonciature. It was important to remember that the National Revolution was only a few months old and that public opinion was badly prepared for the changes envisaged.

DRAC remained unconvinced and on 30 August 1941 replied to Lavagne that in its view public opinion had been on the side of the religious orders for the past twenty five years. As to consultation with the Nonciature this was to be greatly welcomed. 'Nous dépendons du Saint-Siège', DRAC meekly remarked, 'nous sommes les fils, très soumis; sa loi est la nôtre; ses désirs déterminent les nôtres.' But, DRAC added, this consultation should only take place in the future when a definitive statute was drawn up for the religious orders. While evidence remains impressionistic, this last point was perhaps an indication that DRAC did not have the full backing of the papacy.

At this stage, negotiations between DRAC and Pétain's Cabinet Civil

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1. AN 2 AG 493 CC75 B, Letter of Lavagne to DRAC, 2 August 1941
2. AN 2 AG 493 CC75 B, Letter of DRAC to Lavagne, 30 August 1941
broke down. Refusing to give any ground, on 11 September 1941 Lavagne informed DRAC that the law in preparation would satisfy the demands of the religious orders, knowing full well that these requests would not be met.° Certainly time was running out for DRAC. It will be recalled that on 23 November 1941 Darlan threw his weight behind the Interior's proposals of January 1941 thus leaving Barthélémy stranded. Thereafter, there was a growing desperation in DRAC's approaches to Vichy. In a letter of 27 February 1942, the representative of the Supérieurs Religieux de la Zone Libre wrote in a personal capacity to General Laure, a close friend of the Marshal.° He asked Laure to intervene on DRAC's behalf and recalled the deficiencies of the Interior's projected modifications to the law of 1901. He also took time off to chastise the authors of this legislation for their freemasonry and anticlericalism. In a letter of the same date the Délégué de tous les Religieux de France made a similar request to Laure.° In this he begged the plaintive question, 'Pourquoi nous traiter toujours en suspects?' That DRAC did not know the answer to this question by now was a vivid reflexion of its declining credibility in the eyes of Vichy.

1. AN 2 AG 493 CC75 B, Letter of Lavagne to DRAC, 11 September 1941
2. AN 2 AG 493 CC75 B, Letter of the representative of the Supérieurs Religieux de la Zone Libre to General Laure, 27 February 1942
3. AN 2 AG 493 CC75 B, Letter of Délégué de tous les Religieux de France to General Laure, 27 February 1941
Ultimately, then, the law of 8 April, modifying that of 1 July 1901 on associations, fell far short of DRAC's recommendations. Instead it remained faithful to the proposals drawn up in January 1941. As had been originally envisaged, it would no longer be an offence for a religious order to exist as a non-authorised order, although they would still be able to obtain legal recognition. Recognition itself would be accorded by a unanimous decision of the Conseil d'Etat. Those that were successful in their demand would enjoy much the same rights as any other association considered to be of a 'utilité publique'. Likewise, the dissolution of an order or the suppression of one of its establishments could only be decided by a unanimous decision of the Conseil d'Etat. In this regard, a religious order would have no recourse to the lengthy right of appeal DRAC had envisaged. And, finally, those orders which had not been previously been dissolved and which subsequently obtained legal recognition would be eligible to reclaim their former property which had not since been liquidated.

Unlike the law of 3 September 1940, that of 8 April 1942 did not invite the same sort of warm response from Catholics. As has been remarked, this was largely because few people were interested, or indeed in a position to understand, the legal complexities involved. The fact that religious orders were already teaching once more and had been

1. Law of 8 April 1942 in JQ 17 avril 1942
2. Latreille De Gaulle, La Libération et l'Eglise Catholique p.86
allowed to 'rhabiller' was enough to satisfy even the most devout. It was, therefore, only a handful of Catholic papers that gave much prominence to the law of 8 April 1942. For example, Le Nouvelliste de Bretagne of 19 April 1942 announced, 'Après 40 ans d'un injuste ostracisme, la France va reconnaître TOUS SES FILS.' But elsewhere consideration of the law of 8 April was confined to the close print of the Semaines Religieuses.

The religious orders themselves decided on their response at a conference of Superiors organised by DRAC at Lyon on 8 October 1942. Here they made known to Pétain, 'l'hommage de leur gratitude pour le fait acquis de leur existence désormais licite antérieurement à la reconnaissance légale possible.' But, they continued, only a definitive statute would guarantee their full integration into society and urged the government to reach an agreement with the papacy to do away altogether with the law of 1901. Nor was DRAC mollified by an amendment to the legislation of 8 April 1942. By a law of 31 December 1942 tax concessions were granted to those orders that received recognition. But DRAC could not realistically hope for any further concessions of the type it wanted. Vichy's position had been made clear on 17 April 1942

1. AN 72 AJ 1863, extract from Le Nouvelliste de Bretagne 19 avril 1942
3. Law of 31 December 1942 in JO 1 janvier 1943, p.9
in a letter from Lavagne to Mgr Chappoulie. 'En ce que concerne la loi modifiant la loi de 1901', he wrote, 'd'une part, les circonstances se prêtent mal, d'ores et déjà, à une réforme profonde. Le problème des rapports entre l'Eglise et l'Etat ne sauraient être efficacement posé et résolu dès aujourd'hui. L'heure ne permet davantage de reprendre, dans son ensemble, le statut des Associations. Il faut donc savoir attendre l'évolution des conditions politiques, comme aussi, peut-être, une évolution plus marquées des esprits et moeurs.' Cautious to the last, Lavagne argued that it was necessary to proceed in stages and not be led astray by impatience.

With no further concessions to religious orders in the offing, how did the law of 8 April work in practice? In one sense, it appears to have made little difference. Many orders continued to re-don their religious dress and return to their teaching duties regardless. By November 1943 La Semaine Religieuse de Grenoble could proudly report that there were over eighty orders now operating in the diocese. Nearly half of these, it added, were female teaching orders. Often monks and nuns were so eager to return to their former posts that they put their lay colleagues out of a job. On 20 May 1943 such cases were reported in regions as varied as the Isère, Orne, Seine-Inférieure, Alpes-Maritimes

1. AN 2 AG 492 CC72 A, Letter of Lavagne to Mgr Chappoulie, 17 April 1942
2. SR de Grenoble 11 novembre 1943, no.13, pp.72-74
and Paris.' Naturally this could give rise to considerable resentment on the part of the long-suffering 'instituteurs libres'. The same report of 20 May 1943 was amazed at the insensitivity and incomprehension of certain superiors. As soon as they had recovered their right to teach they had, 'congédié sans aucun égard les malheureux instituteurs et institutrices libres qui, depuis 1904, se sont dévoués, en général pour un salaire de famine, à maintenir l'enseignement chrétien.' Yet, it must also be added that some dioceses, desperately short of cash, actively encouraged members of religious orders to teach because they commanded even lower wages still than their secular colleagues.

Elsewhere, as *La Semaine Religieuse de Fréjus et Toulon* commented, the law of 8 April 1942 created confusion. In spite of a detailed circular of 24 April 1942 from the Ministry of the Interior to the Prefects, many officials do not appear to have grasped the full implications of the change. This was the case in the Mayenne. Here in January 1944 the Academy Inspector reported that nearly all of the 'institutrices libres' in the department had re-adopted religious dress,

1. AN 2 AG 496 CC78 A, Report of Jardel, Secrétaire Général du Chef de l'Etat to Mgr Chappoulie, 20 May 1943
2. SR de Fréjus et Toulon, 19 septembre 1942, no.35, p.300
3. AN F17 13390, Circular of 24 April 1942
although none of them belonged to an authorised order.¹ He wondered, therefore, whether their schools were entitled to State subventions. In his reply of 28 April 1944 Bonnard made it clear that they were eligible because it was no longer illegal to be a member of a non-authorised order.² Yet it may also be that some officials deliberately feigned misunderstanding of the law in order to use it as a stick with which to beat the congregations. For example, in the Ardennes in 1942,³ and in the Isère in 1943,⁴ individual members of religious orders were requested to submit copies of their orders' statutes for inspection by the Academy. In neither case, the Church protested, was there a need for this now that the regular clergy had recovered the right to teach.

Overall, only a small number of orders considered applying for legal recognition under the provisions of the law of 8 April 1942. Why this was so remains unclear, but there are three possible explanations. Firstly, it may have been that by late 1942 the religious orders, like the Church in general, wanted to distance themselves from Vichy and not be seen courting favours from a

1. AN F17 13390, Academy Inspector of the Mayenne to Bonnard, 18 January 1944
2. AN F17 13390, Bonnard to Academy Inspector of the Mayenne, 28 April 1944
3. AN F17 13390, Letter of Bonnard to Academy Inspector of the Ardennes, 1 August 1942
4. AN F17 13390, Letter of Directeur Diocésain de l'Enseignement Libre to Academy Inspector of the Isère, 17 December 1943
politically suspect regime. A second possibility is that some orders feared the scorn of their more militant brothers if they sought recognition. 'Les quatre plaies de l'Eglise' was how DRAC described the four missionary orders - the Sulpiciens, Lazaristes, Pères de Saint Esprit and Missions Etrangères - which had conformed to the law of 1901. And, thirdly, it may simply have been that most orders believed they already enjoyed sufficient freedom and did not want to take their chances with the Conseil d'Etat. The fact that the Chartreux were the only male order to have received recognition since 1901 - and then in the most unusual of circumstances - must have been an important factor in this regard.

Nonetheless these reasons did not prevent one female contemplative order, the Carmelites, from seeking and obtaining recognition. Among their male colleagues it is known that at least three orders - the Dominicans, Frères de St-Jean-de-Dieu and the Frères des Ecoles Chrétientes - were seriously considering the move in October 1942, despite earning the censure of DRAC. But, of these, only the Frères des Ecoles Chrétientes took the plunge. The most important of all

1. AN 2 AG 492 CC73E, 'Note à propos des revendications de la DRAC', 8 August 1941
2. Decree no.2376 of 27 August 1943 in IQ 10 septembre 1943 no.217, p.2390
3. AN 2 AG 492 CC73 E, Note by Lavagne, no date (October 1942?)
4. AN 2 AG 492 CC73 E, Letter of DRAC to Mgr Rastouil, 15 October 1942
male teaching orders in elementary education, they wished to recover something of their former standing in France where in the 1880s they had once taught a staggering 1,487,000 pupils. Moreover, they wanted to preserve the French character of the order. Whereas in 1904 over two thirds of the 15,000 brothers had been French, by 1940 these proportions had been reversed. And, finally, the Frères des Écoles Chrétienes were anxious to retrieve something of their property which had been seized in 1904.

The strength of these arguments had already led the order to make two unsuccessful bids for recognition in 1922 and 1928. They were so disappointed at the failure of their second attempt that it was decided to transfer the Maison Mère to Rome. Nevertheless, the Superior General delayed this move until 1936 in the faint hope that the government might have a change of heart. The election of the Popular Front, therefore, must have been a particularly crushing blow. Yet Vichy offered another opportunity. The order had rarely known such popularity and

1. AN 72 AJ 1863, figures in La Dépêche d'Eure-et-Loir 21 décembre 1941
2. AN F17 13365, Letter of Frère F..., Secretary General of the des Frères des Écoles Chrétienes to Bonnard, 26 November 1943
3. AN 2 AG 493 CC75 B, 'Note sur le problème posé par la reconnaissance des Frères des Écoles Chrétienes', 10 February 1944
4. AN 2 AG 82 SP10 E, 'Note relative à l'Institut des Frères des Écoles Chrétienes et à sa demande de reconnaissance légale', (no date, early 1944?)
public acclaim. At Clermont-Ferrand in January 1944 a special exhibition was held at the Pensionnat Godefroy-de-Bouillon chronicling the order's achievements from St-Jean Baptiste de la Salle to the present. Likewise the press sang their praises. La Dépêche d'Eure-et-Loir of 21 December 1941 celebrated their dedication to schooling in the face of the persecution of Emile Combes. More colourful still was the picture drawn by Le Petit Journal of 25 January 1944. This asked the question, 'Le tricorne au vent, le rabat en bataille, la soutane relevée, qui n'a vu le frère des écoles chrétiennes conduire sa marmaille par les routes, jouer avec elle, la distraire après l'avoir enseignée?'

Yet the Frères des Ecoles Chrétiennes were fully aware that popular support in itself was insufficient to guarantee them recognition. Success or failure would depend on the careful presentation of their case. Nor was this point lost on Rome, to whom the order was directly responsible. In a letter of 1 March 1943, Bérard made known to Vichy the Vatican's fears that the slightest mistake might lead to the demand for recognition being 'torpedoed' by the Conseil d'Etat. To prevent this, Rome was determined to keep a watchful eye on developments as soon as

1. AN 2 AG 128 SP60 A, extract from Le Petit Journal 20 janvier 1944
2. AN 72 AJ 1863, extract from La Dépêche d'Eure-et-Loir, 21 décembre 1941
3. AN 2 AG 128 SP60 A, extract from Le Petit Journal 25 janvier 1944
4. AN 2 AG 492 CC73 E, Letter of Bérard to Lavagne, 1 March 1943
the request had been deposited with Vichy on 17 March 1943. Yet the Vatican was also determined to preserve intact papal authority over the order. In no way was recognition to entail the usurpation of this power by the French State.

These misgivings soon acquired some foundation. In the course of the preliminary meetings of October 1943 (before the demand was submitted to the Conseil d'Etat), a lively debate ensued between the Ministry of the Interior and Ministry of Foreign Affairs. While both departments ultimately favoured recognition, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was deeply troubled that the Frères des Ecoles Chrétiennes had lost their French character. This argument was put most forcefully by Cheffaud, Inspecteur Général des Oeuvres Françaises à l'Etranger, and by Canet, Conseiller d'Etat. They recalled that in 1936 the Maison Mère had been transferred to Rome and that only one-third of the 1,500 Frères were now French. They were further troubled that the post of Superior General, currently vacant following the death of Frère Jumon Victor on

1. AN 2 AG 492 CC72 B, Letter of Sauret to Lavagne, 23 March 1943, recalls that the demand was lodged with the Ministry of the Interior on 17 March 1943
2. AN F17 13349, 'Procès-Verbal de la Réunion tenue le 9 Octobre pour étudier la demande de reconnaissance légale présentée par les Frères des Ecoles Chrétiennes', (1943)
3. AN 2 AG 493 CC75 B, 'Note sur l'avis émis par le Secrétair d'Etat aux Affaires Etrangères sur la demande de reconnaissance légale déposée par l'Institut des Frères des Ecoles Chrétiennes', by Lavagne, (no date, late 1943, early 1944?)
25 October 1940, might at some future date be filled by a non-Frenchman. Such Gallican scruples led Chauffaud and Canet to lay down two conditions before recognition could be granted: firstly, that the Maison Mère return to France; and, secondly, that it should be written into the statutes that the order could only elect a French Superior General.

These conditions were rejected by the Ministry of the Interior on the grounds that the Vatican would not allow a civilian power to interfere in the election of a Superior General. Cardinal Maglione had already made this known to Bérard in July 1942. Nor did the Interior believe that the foreign elements within the order would allow the Maison Mère to return to France. Having been expelled from there in 1904, it was not expected that they would be in any hurry to return. Instead, the Interior argued that the most effective means of safeguarding the French character of the order was to accept the demand for recognition with no such strings attached. This would bolster the influence of the remaining French Frères and might even ensure the election of a French Superior General. Yet such a move was to be

1. AN 2 AG 493 CC75 B, Note of 9 May 1944 recalls these two conditions
2. AN 2 AG 492 CC73 E, Letter of Bérard to Laval, 18 July 1942
3. AN 2 AG 493 CC75 B, 'Note sur le Problème posé par la reconnaissance des Frères des Ecoles Chrétienes', by Lavagne, 10 February 1944
welcomed for two further reasons. Abroad, it was hoped that the Vatican, in the face of such liberalism, would be put off 'romanizing' other important French orders like the Lazarists and the Pères du Saint-Esprit. And, at home, it was believed that this generosity would soften the hostile attitude several orders had adopted towards Vichy and encourage them to place their own demands for recognition.

By February 1944 the two very different approaches both Ministries had adopted to realise the same ends had led to a stalemate. This, in turn, was especially troubling to Pétain's Cabinet Civil. Anxious to instil confidence in the ailing law of 8 April 1942, Lavagne feared that the longer the disagreement went on the less chance of success the order stood with the Conseil d'État. Of the two solutions he much preferred the Interior's and considered this by far the wisest course. Yet he expressed worries that some might object to the liberalism of the scheme on the grounds that it ran the risk of an extremely important French teaching order falling under the control of a foreign Superior General. These fears were heightened in mid-February 1944 when it was rumoured that Laval, hearing of the divergence of views expressed in his name by the Ministries of the Interior and Foreign Affairs, had decided to

1. AN 2 AG 493 CC75 B, Note of 31 January 1944
2. AN 2 AG 493 CC75 B, Letter of Lavagne to Jardel, 24 January 1944
3. AN 2 AG 493 CC75 B, 'Note sur le problème posé par la reconnaissance des Frères des Ecoles Chrétienes', by Lavagne, 10 February 1944
settle the question.' This was to be avoided at all costs and instructions were sent out to ensure that Laval was allowed to keep the dossier on the Frères des Ecoles Chrétienues for no more than a week. Otherwise, as Lavagne himself remarked, 'J'ai très peur d'une solution hâtive, prise un peu hasard et tranchant sommairement ce problème délicate.'

To prevent any attempt Laval or anyone else might make to intervene in the case, Lavagne drew up his own set of alternative proposals. On his own admission these were of a stop-gap nature and were only to be put forward should the Interior's recommendations be rejected. Lavagne's plans were based on the belief that, above all else, the Frères des Ecoles Chrétienues wanted legal recognition to recover their property. Thus he advocated that the State should only agree to return this on the condition that the order guarded its French character. If at some future date there was a danger of either the Vatican or 'frères étrangers' taking over the order, then the State should threaten to reclaim this property. 'En exigeant cette condition', concluded Lavagne, 'l'Etat reste strictement dans son domaine: libre de rendre au nom à une Congrégation sa puissance matérielle sur notre territoire.' The State was in no way interfering in the internal running of the order. Thus

1. AN 2 AG 493 CC75 B, Letter of Lavagne, 14 February 1944
2. ibid
3. AN 2 AG 493 CC75 B, 'Note sur le problème posé par la reconnaissance des Frères des Ecoles Chrétienues', by Lavagne, 10 February 1944
Lavagne believed that this solution would be acceptable to both the Vatican and to the 'Frères' themselves.

It remains highly questionable whether or not the Church would ever have agreed to granting the State this power. In the event, Laval's intervention failed to materialise and Lavagne was not called upon to put forward his solution. Rather it appears that the Ministry of the Interior was able to overcome the earlier opposition of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Consequently, the Interior was able to keep to its original proposals. Yet what these arguments reveal are the huge gulfs that now existed within Vichy, not just in regard to the religious orders, but towards the Church in general. On the one hand, there was the fixed position of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In the words of Lavagne, this was "l'attitude intransigeante et ferme d'une politique d'autorité qui impose directement, par la pression de sa seule force et grâce aux atouts qu'il a dans son jeu, ses désirs de rétablir un passé aboli et de reconquérir les avantages perdus par nos propres fautes, depuis 1901-1905."

Then there was the more supple and flexible position favoured by Pétain's Cabinet Civil and the Ministry of the Interior. "C'est cette politique de prudence conciliante', continued Lavagne, 'qui

1. AN 2 AG 493 CC75 B, 'Note sur l'avis émis par le Secrétaire d'Etat aux Affaires Étrangères sur la demande de reconnaissance légale déposée par l'Institut des Frères des Ecoles Chrétienennes', by Lavagne no date (late 1943, early 1944?)

2. ibid
a été suivie depuis 1940, comprenant la nécessité de certaines concessions et même de certains sacrifices, quitte à tenir ferme quant les limites sont atteintes, évitant le risque de détruire ce qui subsiste encore malgré les conséquences de la politique anti-cléricale, s'efforçant de tourner les obstacles, de reconquérir petit à petit, insensiblement, le terrain perdu sans provoquer les susceptibilités du St-Siège et de certains nationalismes. All in all, such observations are a vivid rejection of the internal divisions that characterised the final days of the Vichy government.

Ultimately, the request of the Frères des Ecoles Chrétiennes reached the Conseil d'État on 1 August 1944. Here Sauret, representing the Ministry of the Interior and Pétain, put forward the case for recognition. This would be a just reward, he argued, for the eminent services the order had performed for France and would be in line with the 'esprit nouveau' of government policy. Nor did the Ministry of Education raise any objections. St-Jolly, the Director of Primary Education, reported that the Frères des Ecoles Chrétiennes fulfilled all existing laws governing the quality of teaching in private schools. He also paid eloquent tribute to the civilizing work the order had performed both within and outside of France. Yet these arguments failed to overcome the entrenched Gallicanism of the Conseil d'État. While all the Conseillers agreed in principle to the desirability of recognition,

1. AN F17 13365, Report on the meeting of the Conseil d'État, 1 August 1944, by St-Jolly, Director of Primary Education
they raised the familiar points that only one third of the order was French and that the Maison Mère was not in France. To recognise an order whose seat was in Rome without conditions, they objected, was to place 'en mauvaise posture devant la Papauté les Congrégations françaises qui lui ont refusé de s'installer à Rome.' Before recognition could be granted, they required further safeguards on the location of the Maison Mère, the method of election of the Superior General, and the role of the Délégué Général who would represent the order in France. Thus, after two years of careful preparation and hard bargaining, the request of the Frères des Ecoles Chrétiennes had got no further than when it had started. Within a month it would be too late to begin again.

The failure of the Frères des Ecoles Chrétiennes to obtain legal recognition sharply underlined the limitations of the law of 8 April 1942 and did little to endear other teaching orders to the regime. Not that their support had ever been that great in the first place. In the months immediately following the defeat the religious orders were one of the most restrained sections of the Church in their praise for Marshal Pétain. This attitude is not difficult to explain. Being directly responsible to Rome, they enjoyed far greater independence in their internal affairs than their secular colleagues. Freedom of action quickly instilled freedom of thought. Moreover, forty years of living

1. AN F17 13365, Report on the meeting of the Conseil d'Etat, 1 August 1944, by St-Jolly, Director of Primary Education
outside the law had taught them to be suspicious of civilian power, however clerical the regime.

Accordingly, the religious orders never gave Vichy anything more than a cautious welcome. This soon turned to unease despite the law of 3 September 1940. For example, in August 1941 the Dominican Prieur Provincial de la Province de Lyon urged his fellow brothers to cast away their doubts about Vichy and practice 'un loyalisme sincère, complet envers les pouvoirs publics.' He vigorously denied claims that the majority of orders, and in particular the Jesuits and Dominicans, were Gaullist in sympathy. Yet mounting disappointment at the regime's inability to assist the orders, typified by the law of 8 April 1942, only damaged Vichy's credibility further. In the opening months of 1943, a report undertaken by the Jesuits, at the Vatican's bequest, into 'l'état d'esprit des milieux religieux de l'enseignement' commented that teaching orders felt little gratitude towards the government. At the Liberation, these attitudes were confirmed by the Commissaires de la République. 'Dès le début', wrote the Commissaire de Montpellier, 'les ordres réguliers manifestèrent une hostilité très nette à l'égard du Gouvernement de Vichy.' Nor is it surprising that religious orders

1. AN 2 AG 492 CC72 A, Letter of E... C..., Prieur Provincial de la Province de Lyon to R.P.F...., Primeur des Dominicains, St.Alban-en-Leysse (Savoie), 23 August 1941. This letter had been intercepted by Vichy on 26 August 1941.

2. AN 2 AG 492 CC72 A, Note marked 'Secret', 25 March 1943

3. Latreille De Gaulle. La Libération et l'Eglise Catholique p.87
played a significant role in the Liberation itself. In Savoie the Frères des Ecoles Chrétiennes were especially noticeable in the ranks of the Resistance,' as they were at Reims. There the Commissaire remarked, 'Je dois noter l'attitude particulièrement patriotique des Frères des Ecoles Chrétiennes. J'ai remarqué plusieurs d'entre eux dans les rangs des FFI que j'ai passés en revue au lendemain de la Libération dans plusieurs villes de la région.' Ultimately, few orders were sad to see the demise of the regime.

Vichy itself harboured few illusions about how it was viewed by the regular clergy. But the regime blamed this hostility - and to an extent justifiably - on the Third Republic. In a letter of 4 January 1943, Lavagne argued that the odious and absurd policies of the previous forty years had instilled among the orders a 'méfiance excessive et hostile à l'égard des Pouvoirs établis, tendance à la dissimulation et à la fraude, irrespect de la loi, etc.' "Ces habitudes", he continued, 'sont maintenant trop ancrées et trop anciennes pour être abandonnées en quelques mois, mais elles sont néfastes à tous les points de vue et leur cause ayant disparu, elles doivent s'effacer progressivement. Si j'osais, je dirais que par la faute de l'anti-cléricalisme l'Eglise "a pris le Maquis"; il est temps qu'elle y participe en acceptant


2. Latreille De Gaulle. La Libération et l'Eglise Catholique p. 87

3. AN 2 AG 492 CC73 E, Letter of Lavagne to E.M..., 4 January 1943
Lavagne's comments are a vivid illustration of the frustration felt by several members of the Vichy regime when attempting to help the Church.

Yet there can be little doubt that this desire to help was genuine. During the early months of the Occupation, Vichy was anxious to demonstrate its goodwill towards the religious orders. As a result, it introduced the law of 3 September 1940 and that of 21 February 1941. In turn, this legislation provided some encouragement to the orders themselves - maybe there was a possibility that the regime would overthrow the law on associations? Yet they were soon disappointed. Like previous governments, Vichy was determined to maintain some form of regulatory control. The result was the law of 8 April 1942. While this granted the orders a number of the concessions they had been pressing for, it accomplished little in practice. Moreover, it did not entice the orders to apply for legal recognition. With Laval now in charge, they understood that there was little chance of success. The failure of the demand of the Frères des Ecoles Chrétienes only confirmed their suspicions. Thus, in the eyes of several of the regular clergy, Vichy failed to live up to its initial promise. By 1943 it seemed little different from the Republican governments that had preceded it.
Chapter Seven

THE CHURCH AND THE 'INSTITUTEURS'

Whereas the Church was quick to exonerate its own teachers from any responsibility for the defeat, it was equally adept at pinning the blame on the State 'instituteurs'. Not surprisingly Catholic criticism focussed on their secularizing influence. For a long time, the Church had held them responsible for the laicization of France, a charge that dated back to the 1880s. This was when the fledgeling Third Republic, anxious to combat the twin dangers of monarchism and clericalism, had used the 'instituteurs' as a vehicle for its own Republican propaganda. Trained in the secular 'école normale' and armed with a religiously neutral pedagogy, the 'instituteur' had come to expound a world view that directly challenged the Church's hierarchical and corporatist vision of society.' In turn, Catholics had felt an increasing resentment against the teaching body, believing them the cause of the dechristianization of France and of the Church's loss of influence over the young. In 1940, the results of this process, Catholics argued, were all too plain to see. As La Croix of 24 August 1940 remarked, in 1914 teachers had not managed to achieve their goal, that of a 'laïcisme intégral'; in 1940, it added, they had.2

1. For an introduction to the role of the 'instituteurs' in the early years of the Third Republic, see G.Duveau Les Instituteurs (Paris, Seuil, 1957); A. Ferré L'Instituteur (Paris, La Table Ronde, 1954); and J.Ozouf Nous, les Maîtres d'Ecole: autobiographies d'instituteurs de la 'Belle Époque' (Paris, René Juillard, 1967).

2. La Croix 24 août 1940
Closely allied to Catholic allegations of irreligiosity on the part of the 'instituteurs' were those of anti-patriotism. In the eyes of the Church, it was necessary to be a Christian in order to become a patriot. As Mgr. Auvity, bishop of Mende, stated in late August 1940, 'L'athéisme, d'une façon générale, n'a jamais été une source d'ideal, encore moins de patriotisme. Vouloir bâtir sans le divin Créateur, c'est bâtir sur le sable mouvant.' Here too, then, teachers had failed their country. By having abandoned Christianity and by not having taught its principles, they had effectively destroyed a sense of commitment to 'la patrie', a commitment that would have saved France on the battlefield. In preference, teachers had drifted towards pacifism, being drawn to the rocks of anti-patriotism by the pull of internationalist and socialist sentiment. So strong was their pacifism that some Catholics in 1940 expressed surprise that France had managed to win the last war. Even then, sneered Paul Claudel, the Catholic poet, teachers had managed to cover themselves in shame.

Behind the promotion of anti-patriotic and anticlerical feeling the Church was quick to name two principal offenders: freemasonry and the SNJ. Of the two, freemasonry was the beast the Church knew best and elder Catholics loved the least. Again this was a squabble that had its roots in the 1880s when the hated Ferry reforms had been

1. La Croix 4 septembre 1940

2. Paul Claudel writing in Journal Intime, his unpublished private diary, cited in Griffiths Pétain p.251
planned in connection with the Lodges. Then freemasonry had been an extremely powerful force among the ranks of schoolteachers and Education Ministry officials. Writing in 1926, Mgr Landrieux claimed that in spite of the papal encyclical of Leo XIII, *Humanum Genus*, condemning the movement, freemasonry had entrenched itself in all walks of public life. In fact, its influence within education had probably passed its peak by 1914, yet in 1940 Catholics were in no mood to forgive or forget. They remembered more recently that it was the Lodges who had been active in their support for the 'école unique' in 1924, and that Jean Zay, the Education Minister of the Popular Front, had been a mason as well as a Jew, conjuring up images of a revived Jewish-Masonic conspiracy. Du Moulin de Labarthète expressed many of these fears when he wrote, 'Le rôle joué par les sociétés de pensée dans les plus sombres heures de la Révolution, le souvenir du combisme et des fiches, l'influence exercée par les loges dans les élections de 1924 et de 1932, les troubles compromissions de l'affaire Stavisky, demeuraient, encore, présents à nos mémoires.'

In 1940 the clerical assault on freemasonry was spearheaded by *La France Catholique*, the journal of the FNC. Traditionally a fierce

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1. For the early influence of freemasonry among teachers see P. Chevallier *Histoire de la Franc-Maçonnerie Française* Vol 3 *La Maçonnerie Église de la République* (Paris, Fayard, 1975)

2. Mgr Landrieux *La Leçon du Passé* p.18

3. Du Moulin de Labarthète *Le Temps des Illusions* p.277
opponent of masonry, this reminded its readers of their obligations towards the Lodges under Vichy, 'C'est un devoir pour chacun de ne rien ignorer des origines, des doctrines, des méthodes d'une secte dont l'œuvre néfaste pour l'humanité, a exercé chez nous les plus terribles ravages en corrompant notre organisation politique, administrative et sociale, en dégradant les âmes.' Even schoolchildren were warned of the horrors of masonry. Those new history textbooks that were produced in the course of the Occupation devoted a considerable space to the destructive influence of the Lodges. In Chanoine Rolin's Histoire de l'Eglise, which it will be recalled was eventually banned for its combative attitude towards the 'école publique', children were taught that freemasonry had the double aim of 'troubler l'ordre social et détruire le catholicisme, en faisant voter des lois antisociales et antireligieuses.' Similarly, in Christiani's Histoire de France masonry was accused of the evil design of plotting the destruction of Christianity through the introduction of anticlerical legislation in the 1880s.

No less colourful were the criticisms levelled at the SNI. Founded just after the First World War, this was believed to have become the

1. La France Catholique 20 novembre 1941
2. Ch. Rolin Histoire de l'Eglise p.133. Please see below for a commentary of this textbook, p.127
3. Christiani Histoire de France Vol 3 p.394
bastion of anticlerical and anti-patriotic sentiment among teachers, particularly in 1936 when its 136,000 membership, mindful of the carnage of 1914-1918, came out in favour of a General Strike in case of another European conflict. The low esteem by which the SNI was held by Catholics in this period is clearly expressed in a brochure produced at the start of the war by the Jeunesse Étudiante Chrétienne Féminine (JECF). This was designed to provide an objective introduction to State primary education for Catholic parents and parish priests. Objective it is in its description of the structure of the 'école publique', but it fails to resist the temptation of attacking the SNI summarizing its aims as the abolition of the Loi Falloux, the extension of 'laïcité', the destruction of national sentiment and the furtherance of communism. All of these charges, especially that of following the Moscow line, were freely taken up and bandied around in the accusatory atmosphere of summer 1940. As *La Croix* of 28/29 July commented on the inter-war period, 'C'était l'époque où, sans vouloir généraliser, trop de maîtres de l'enseignement primaire, gagnés aux théories communistes, combattaient ouvertement la notion de patrie.'

From such claims we may see that in the immediate aftermath of the defeat, the Church was in no mood to be charitable or extend the hand

2. *La Croix* 28/29 juillet 1940
of Christian friendship to teachers. Feeling assured of its privileged position under Vichy, and taking advantage of the low regard generally felt by much of France towards the profession, the Church was not mindful of the damaging and long-term effects such condemnations might have on the relationship between itself and the 'instituteurs' at either a national or local level. In July and August of 1940 the Church did not stop to consider whether or not all teachers were as black as they had been painted, whether they were all freemasons or trade unionists. While more balanced opinions began to prevail by the end of the year, in the summer these were stifled by the general frenzy to discover the guilty behind the débâcle. Paul Claudel spoke for many in the Church when he wrote on 6 July 1940, 'France has been delivered from the yoke of the anti-Catholic Radical Party (teachers, lawyers, Jews, Freemasons). The new government invokes God and gives back La Grande Chartreuse to the monks. There is hope of being delivered from universal suffrage, and from the stupid and evil domination of the teachers...'

Such denunciations echoed those made by members of the Vichy government itself. They too wanted to see the power of the 'instituteurs' broken and varied little from the Church in their criticisms. Charges of anti-patriotism and anticlericalism directed at freemasonry and the SNI came thick and fast from members of the new government. Pétain was heard to comment to Bullitt, the American

1. Paul Claudel writing in *Journal Intime*, his unpublished private diary, cited in Griffiths *Pétain* p.251
ambassador, that France had lost the war because her teachers had not been patriots. Even Laval, not normally noted for his comments on domestic affairs, chastised the teachers for their internationalism. But Vichy had other reasons for disliking the teachers. Charges of anti-patriotism, for instance, came especially easy to the military men Pétain, Weygand and Darlan who had a vested interest in diverting attention away from their own role in the defeat. What further united the various right wing politicians that crowded the hotels of Vichy, clericals and anticlericals, was their hatred of unions. As has been remarked, what characterizes the National Revolution more than anything else was its open hostility to the Left and Trades Unionism. The fact that the SNI was socialist, a member of the Confédération Générale du Travail (CGT) and technically illegal, as according to the law of 1884 civil servants were not supposed to unionize, damned the teachers in the eyes of Vichy before any anticlerical statement.

On whatever the grounds the regime based its analysis, we may see in the summer of 1940, that the Church and Vichy were very much at one in their attitude towards the teachers. Both had arrived at the same

1. Paxton *Vichy France* p.37
conclusions, both identified the same evils and both were united in their desire to see the teachers' power broken. What would follow may be best described as a destructive strategy that would last roughly until the end of the year. Undertaken by the Ministry of the Interior and the first three Education Ministers, Rivaud, Mireaux and Ripert, the measures adopted fell into three main categories: those designed to exercise greater control over the government's employees; those to outlaw the SNI; and those to combat freemasonry. All in all, it was exactly the kind of package for which the Church could have hoped.

First came a host of general measures intended to emphasize the State's authority over its employees. These were heralded by a law of 17 July 1940. As a circular of 17 November 1940 later summarized, this was designed to dismiss any civil servants, 'qui ne sont plus capables d'un service professionnel suffisant et aussi [de] ceux qui ne comprennent pas, à l'heure actuelle, la nécessité de renoncer aux agitations politiques anciennes et de servir de toutes leurs forces leurs pays suivant les directives qui leur sont données par le Gouvernement.' In practice, the law was aimed against communists, socialists and those not of direct French descent. As an immediate consequence it has been estimated that 137 teachers were dismissed although, as we will

1. AN F17 13318, Circular of 15 November 1940
see this number was later to rise. Other than those not of French descent were hit further by another law of the same date which imposed strict nationality restrictions on public employees. This was clearly aimed at Jews and, if any doubts remained, these were soon dispelled by legislation of 20 October 1940, which, perhaps in an attempt to please the Germans, excluded Jews from teaching altogether. It does not appear to have displeased the Church which had not often mentioned Jews in its utterances on teachers, but whose conscience in this regard had not so far been pricked.

The second round of measures that struck at the SNI were also heralded by a law of 20 October. This simply abolished the union. In its place Vichy set up a number of State-run associations. But neither Vichy nor the Church considered this sufficient in itself. It was widely recognised that union members had firmly ensconced themselves in positions of authority, particularly in the departmental 'comités consultatifs'. These were essentially advisory bodies which were intended to allow teachers some say in the choice of promotions and changes of post. They comprised the Academy Inspector, the Primary Inspector, the principals of the departmental 'écoles normales', two 'instituteurs' and two 'institutrices'. Yet it was their

1. Cf. Halls The Youth of Vichy France p.113 et seq
2. Law of 17 Juillet 1940 in JQ 18 juillet 1940, p.4537
3. For a study of these associations see Halls The Youth of Vichy France p.121
opponents' contention that they had become dominated by the SNI thereby undermining the authority of the Academy Inspector.' La Croix of 28/29 July 1940 alleged, 'Devant leurs décisions, qui s'exerçaient avec un despotisme mis tout entier au service d'une passion scolaire, les autorités hiérarchiques étaient impuissantes.' ¹² 'Rappelons nous', continued La Croix, 'les cas si nombreux où des villages entiers, municipalités en tête, protestaient en vain contre le maintien d'un instituteur dont l'enseignement corrompa l'esprit et le coeur des enfants.' Thus the Church enthusiastically received a circular of 22 July 1940 which abolished the 'comités consultatifs'. In future, all promotions were to be made by the Academy Inspector whereas repostings were entrusted to the Prefect. In itself this was a minor step against the SNI, but was considered important for the reassertion of governmental authority.

The Church further welcomed Vichy's reform of the 'conseils départementaux'. Like the 'comités consultatifs' these were consultative commissions which advised on almost every aspect of primary education in the department ranging from the building of new schools, both public and private, to the adoption of new textbooks. Meeting each term the committees comprised the Prefect, Academy Inspector, two

1. Le Temps 30 juillet 1940
2. La Croix 28/29 juillet 1940
Primary Inspectors, the principals of the 'écoles normales' and numerous nominees of the teachers' union. Again it was the complaint of Vichy and the Church that these committees had become dominated by the SNI. This, said La Croix in January 1941, led to administrative decisions becoming political and religious ones, more often than not against Catholic interests and, in the face of which, the Prefect was powerless to act. La Croix rejoiced that as a result of legislation of 13 December 1940 all future teacher representatives on the committees would be government appointees. Now there was a real chance, it claimed, of impartiality and fair play.

Finally, Vichy took a number of measures to combat freemasonry. A law of 13 August 1940 abolished secret societies and forced freemasons to declare their Lodge. La Croix of 3 September 1940 warmly endorsed this move proclaiming 'L'Etat a le droit et le devoir de défendre son existence et son action, comme l'Eglise a le droit de proscrire les erreurs morales et religieuses et de chasser de son sein les rebelles à ses prescriptions.' For the moment no action was taken against former masons as long as they renounced their membership. But, in the meantime, Bernard Fay, in charge of Vichy's Service des Sociétés Secrètes, was busy counting how many masons had held public office. Out of these a

1. La Croix 1/2 janvier 1941
2. Law of 13 August 1940 in JO 14 août 1940, no. 201, p.4691
3. La Croix 3 September 1940
probable 14,000 were eventually dismissed, a good many of them from
education. By autumn 1941 the Journal Officiel had published the names
of 1328 teachers to be discharged. Likewise, if we take a particular
department we may see that it was usually teachers who were the worst
hit. Figures from the Deux Sèvres show that by the end of the war, out
of a total of 122 State employees dismissed, 25 were 'institutuers', the
highest figure from any one profession. Only the Poste Téléphone
Télégraphe and the Syndicat National des Chemins de Fer lost nearly as
many, whereas most other professions, ranging from farming to
engineering, suffered no more than one or two losses. 

This initial assault on teachers in the early months of Vichy
undoubtedly had a significant impact at a local level. Here during the
inter-war period and at the start of 1940, relations between Catholics
and teachers were not necessarily that bad. National conflicts did not
always translate into domestic ones. In the villages the 'curé' and
'instituteur' would often manage to offset their alleged differences and
discover a 'modus vivendi'. Catholic communities would accept their
supposedly secular schoolteacher without great demur. Yet, in the months
immediately following the defeat, existing patterns were profoundly
disturbed by a series of populist denunciations of teachers. To an
extent, this was a campaign orchestrated by Vichy itself, anxious for

1. Paxton Vichy France p.156
2. D. Rossignol Vichy et les Francs-Maçons. La Liquidation des Sociétés
information on renegades and desirous to establish a system of political and ideological surveillance over its employees. But it was also part of a wider movement whose encouragement came from elsewhere. Taking their cue from the Church's national pronouncements on teachers and support for government action, many local Catholic dignitaries, particularly parish priests, appear to have whipped up popular feeling against teachers turning them into objects of public disdain and anger.

There followed a series of Catholic allegations of communism, anticlericalism and immorality on the part of local teachers. For example, on 24 November 1940 the Catholic mayor of Maillane in the diocese of Aix warned parents of the dangers of sending their children to teachers who did not have their confidence. Fortunately for the two local 'instituteurs', who displayed the crucifix on their school walls, they were well thought of; yet the message was clear. After the war, one 'cure', reflecting on his childhood in the West of France during the Occupation, recalled that in his village the 'instituteur' was reputed to be a freemason. This led a group of local dignitaries to draw up a petition denouncing him as unfit to teach. This failed only on the


2. SR d'Aix 1 décembre 1940 no.48 p.482

intervention of the curé's father who pointed out to the petitioners, 'Vous dites que l'instituteur est incompétent; vous n'en savez rien, puisque vos enfants comme les miens ne sont pas ses élèves.' Yet teachers elsewhere were not so fortunate. The Academy Inspector of the Loire reported an upsurge of teachers being denounced from the pulpit at the start of Vichy. How many lost their jobs because of these interventions is difficult to say. Once an allegation had been made then there was a strong chance it would be followed up by the Inspection Académique. What is clear is that if a teacher had any common sense he kept his head down and said nothing provocative. For the time being at least, he was prepared to allow the 'curé' the leading role in the village.

Such populist denunciations reached their peak in late 1940 and early 1941 in the wake of Vichy's initial legislation on teachers. As may be imagined many of these allegations, when investigated, were discovered to be unfounded, often being no more than personal jealousies and vendettas. In turn, this realisation slowly provoked Academy inspectors into defending the values of the 'école publique'. The Academy Inspector of the Loire, for example, was fiercely dismissive of Catholic attacks on State teachers. Yet on a national level, as early as late autumn 1940, there was a growing recognition that teachers

1. AN F17 13356, Report of the Academy Inspector of the Loire, 16 April 1943
2. ibid
were not as uniformly evil as they had been portrayed. In a circular of 8 August of 1940, Mireaux announced, 'Dans les jours que nous venons de vivre, de nombreux fonctionnaires de l'Instruction Publique, administrateurs, professeurs et instituteurs, ont fait preuve de sang-froid, de décision, de dévouement et de courage dans l'exercice de leurs fonctions et aussi dans la collaboration qu'ils ont apporté spontanément aux Services publics.' Casualty figures from the war did much to dispel accusations of antipatriotism, revealing that, as a profession, teachers had suffered as badly as any other. For Vichy there was the further acknowledgement that if the National Revolution was to succeed, then they would have to enlist the support of the teachers. They could not go on attacking their number as this would simply destroy morale. Likewise the Church saw the same dangers. Given the economic straitjacket in which the Church found itself in 1940, it was obvious that its own schools and teachers could not carry out the work of national restoration unaided.

Consequently, at the close of 1940, we see again Church and State coming to similar conclusions vis-à-vis the 'instituteurs'. Both understood that they were going to have to play an important role in the

1. AN F17 13318, Circular of 8 August 1940 from Mireaux to the Rectors and Academy Inspectors

2. The argument that teachers had suffered as badly as any other profession was later used by F. Dexamier, an 'instituteur' himself, in a pamphlet Pour une Education Nationale: aux Instituteurs Français (Limoges, Imprimerie Nouvelle, 1943) contained in AN F17 13346
rebuilding of France, and that a more constructive, and maybe even conciliatory policy was needed in their regard. This, they agreed, would have to deal with two major problems if teachers were to be the true servants of France. Firstly, it was necessary to tackle the future training of teachers to ensure that they would not commit the same errors as their predecessors. Secondly, it was considered imperative to re-cast the political and religious attitudes of present teachers in order for them to be loyal supporters and advocates of the National Revolution. As we shall see, of these problems, the latter proved the thornier, and as early as February 1941 it was threatening relations between Church and State as well as between the 'curé' and the 'instituteur' in the countryside.

Nevertheless, broad agreement was reached on the training of new teachers. Here the debate centred on the 'écoles normales', the training colleges of the old Republic, conveniently held responsible for much that was wrong with education in France.' Between the ages of fifteen and eighteen, it was alleged, students were taken into the closed world of the 'internat' where, under the tutelage of ex-primary schoolteachers, they were subjected to an undiluted diet of Durkheim, Lévy Bruhl and the encyclopedists, authors few students understood or

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bothered to read properly.' As Le Temps of 23 September 1940 commented, 'L'expérience a prouvé que ces écoles, qui ont formé des instituteurs d'une aptitude pédagogique certaine, présentent le grave inconvénient de confiner les futurs maîtres dans l'étude d'un programme trop spécialement établi et de laisser ces maîtres dans un isolement intellectuel où s'est parfois développée une certaine idéologie politique.' As a result of their upbringing, future teachers were held to be imbued with an excessive individualism, a combative republicanism and a hardened secularism.

For the Church the 'écoles normales' were hot-beds of anticlericalism. La Semaine Religieuse de Paris claimed that for the past forty years they had raised students in an irreligious and anti-Catholic environment. Others alleged that even before a pupil was accepted, the principal made discreet enquiries about the anticlerical and republican credentials of his family. Once in, students were cut off from religion altogether. Certainly those young 'institutrices' who dared attend mass received scorn from their fellow pupils and came to be known as 'Davidées', an abusive reference to a group of Catholic teachers who, in the late 1920s and early 1930s had taken inspiration

1. S. Jeanneret La Vérité Sur les Instituteurs (Paris, Flammarion, 1941) p.28 (Hereafter Jeanneret La Vérité)
2. Le Temps 23 septembre 1940
3. SR de Paris 18 avril 1942, no.4595, p.232
4. Jeanneret La Vérité p.24
from the novel of Réné Bazin, *Davidée Birot.* In this atmosphere, it was argued, religion had been replaced by the false gods of Reason and Science. Accordingly, the newly qualified teacher emerged as the priest of a new Church, a member of the SNI, with a copy of *L'Ecole Libératrice* or *Le Canard Enchaînée* under his arm.²

Stereotypes like this sealed the fate of the 'écoles normales', and on 1 October 1940 they were abolished. To reintegrate teachers into society it was decided that in future, candidates would have to attend a lycée and take the 'baccalauréat' before going on to specially established training colleges for eighteen months where students would be taught the values of 'Travail, Famille, Patrie'. A large part of the new curriculum was to be devoted to:


No longer would students be raised on Durkheim, but Catholic

2. Jeanneret *La Vérité* p.24
3. *Le Temps* 24 octobre 1940
authors like de Maistre and Péguy.

Ironically the idea of first sending the would-be teacher to a 'lycée' for a short spell was an idea originally muted in 1937 by the Left, keen not to break the Republicanism of the 'instituteurs', but to give them an experience of all walks of life.¹ This though did not prevent the Church from enthusiastically welcoming Vichy's reforms. La Croix of 24 October 1940 believed that the new training would engender a truly national formation.² The Church's note of triumph was typified at the beginning of 1942 by the audacious request of Mgr Gaudron, bishop of Évreux, to convert the buildings of the former departmental 'école normale' for use as a 'grand séminaire', the old seminary having been destroyed by bombardment.³ Although Pétain was sympathetic, first Carcopino and then Bonnard obstructed the bishop's designs. In a letter to Pétain's Cabinet Civil of 12 May 1943, Bonnard argued that such a move would be too provocative to members of 'enseignement public'.⁴

Although Catholics could savour their moment of revenge over the 'écoles normales', Vichy's reforms were deeply disappointing to both the Church and the regime itself. Entering the 'lycée' at the late age of fifteen, potential teachers felt like outcasts and subsequently found

1. Zay Souvenirs et Solitude pp.261-62
2. La Croix 24 octobre 1940
3. AN F17 13365, Letter of Jardel to Bonnard, 26 February 1943, recounts the history of the bishop's request
4. AN 2 AG 492 CC73 C, Letter of Bonnard to Jardel, 12 May 1943
difficulty in fitting into their special training colleges. In any case, once they had passed the 'baccalauréat' the temptation was to leave teaching altogether and move on to a better paid profession. It has been calculated that 80 per cent of would-be teachers gave up the idea of becoming 'instituteurs' once they had been inserted into the secondary school system.' So disappointing were the results of Vichy's reforms that it was reputed that as early as July 1942 St Joly, the Director of Primary Education, was considering a return to the old Republican system.²

Meanwhile, by the beginning of 1941 the more pressing question was how to re-shape the attitudes of the present teaching body. To an extent, this was a question already being faced. As a result of the initial hostile measures taken against the SNF and freemasonry, teachers were in a subdued mood and afraid of speaking out. Furthermore these measures had facilitated a wider system of State surveillance through the Inspection Académique, a system to which the Church unofficially contributed through its own populist denunciations. Given this machinery, Vichy argued, they had teachers where they wanted them. The task now was to inculcate slowly the values of the National Revolution through new textbooks, préfectoral circulars and ministerial encouragement. But to the Church this in itself was insufficient.

1. Zeldin France 1848-1945 Vol 2 p.165
2. AN 71 AJ 64, 'La Réforme Carcopino, 25/7/43'
What Catholic leaders wanted to see was teachers take a different line on religion. As France had lost the war due to its absence, it was imperative that it should be re-instated into schools. This would require the 'instituteurs' to break their traditional neutrality and teach the values of Christianity. In a speech at the close of December 1940, Mgr Théas, the bishop of Montauban, looked forward to the day when the 'instituteur' would say to his pupils, 'il y a un Dieu.'

For one brief tantalising moment, it seemed as though the Church would have its way. As we have already seen in Chapter Three, this was when, on 23 November 1940, Chevalier reintroduced the 'devoirs envers Dieu' within the ethics syllabus of State schools and later, on 6 January 1941, made the catechism an optional subject on the school timetable, even allowing, in 'circonstances exceptionnelles', the priest to enter the 'école publique'. It will also be recalled that Carcopino quickly rescinded the legislation precisely because he and other ministers feared for the repercussions on the relationship between the 'curé' and the 'instituteur'. In future, religious education was again made a voluntary subject, held off the school premises; but in an attempt to please all sides one and a half hours a week were to be allocated on the timetable for the catechism if parents so wished. Yet what has not been discussed is whether or not Carcopino's changes had done enough to contain the situation. Had they really averted a clash

1. La Croix 31 décembre 1940
between the 'curé' and 'instituteur'? And, indeed, had Chevalier's initial legislation created a dilemma that needed to be contained?

As to these questions, it does not appear that Chevalier's legislation led to difficulties in the departments. It went through the pages of the Journal Officiel so quickly that most people noticed neither its presence nor its absence. Likewise, it seems as though Carcopino's measures did enough to contain any possible crisis. A government report of 15 April 1942 remarked that thanks to a spirit of mutual comprehension between priests and teachers there had been no serious incidents and disturbances that merited the intervention of a higher authority. These conclusions are borne out by the Church itself. In October 1941, the bishop of Belley, Mgr Masconobe, commented on the high degree of cooperation between 'instituteurs' and 'curés' in his diocese over the provision of religious education. In the diocese of Clermont, Mgr Piguet could report on 2 December 1941, 'Les accords intervenus entre Curés et Instituteurs, et notamment à Clermont entre M. l'Inspecteur d'Académie et Nous-Même ont manifesté dans leur généralité un mutuel esprit de compréhension et d'adaptation réciproque pour le bien de l'Âme et des conditions de santé physique des enfants intéressés à cette bonne entente, en notre Diocèse plus que nulle part.'

1. AN F17 13390, 'Note sur l'enseignement religieux dans les écoles publiques', 15 April 1942
2. SR de Belley 9 octobre 1941, no.41, p.330
en raison des longues distances des marches en montagne, de la rigueur de la température.'” Similarly, in September 1943 Mgr Marceillac, bishop of Pamiers, could report on the good relations realised between himself and the Academy Inspector as well as the accord reached between the 'curé' and 'instituteur'.

So calm were things that Carcopino was later to go back on his earlier opposition to Chevalier's suggestion that in 'circonstances exceptionnelles', for instance in mountainous areas, the priest could enter the 'école publique' to teach the catechism. At the close of 1941, the diocese of Puy-en-Velay had obtained permission for this in fifteen parishes. The bishop of Limoges, Mgr Rastouil, also received permission for a small number of hamlets. In a letter to Carcopino of 15 October 1941, he pointed out that in the mountains of the Haute-Vienne in winter the route between school and church was hazardous for children. He added, 'Je sais que la France nouvelle ne veut plus de ces vieux errements qui violaient la justice, l'égalité, la fraternité, comme l'erreurment de l'autobus Herriot qui, dans les montagnes, prenait exclusivement des hameaux éloignés les enfants de l'école laïque, tandis

1. SR de Clermont 6 décembre 1941, no.49, p.493
2. SC de Pamiers 23 septembre 1943, no.3154, p.184
3. SR du Puy-en-Velay 20 février 1942, no.21, p.224; 2 mai 1942, p.34; and 15 janvier 1943, no.15, p.166
4. SR de Limoges 24 octobre 1941, no.38, pp.320-323
que les petits de l'école libre marchaient longuement et durement sur la neige ou le verglas.' In his reply of 19 October 1941, granting the bishop's request, Carcopino thanked Rastouil for his concern to avoid conflict between 'curé' and 'instituteur.' Later in December 1943, even Bonnard, not normally noted for his spirit of reconciliation, granted Rastouil a further extension of Carcopino's original concession.2

When there was trouble between the 'curé' and the 'instituteur' it may well have revolved around the times when the 'curé' was to take his classes. By a circular of 7 April 1941, Carcopino had suggested that the one and a half hours accredited on the timetable for religious education be placed at the very start or the very end of the school day.3 What this did was to give the obstreperous secular 'instituteur', if he so desired, the marvellous opportunity of playing the old game of confusing the 'curé' with the demands of his timetable. In the diocese of Aix, for example, a number of open letters written by priests to the editor of La Semaine Religieuse d'Aix revealed all sorts of problems over timetabling, several undoubtedly genuine, encountered with the 'instituteur'.4 In the diocese of Lyon, the 'rentrée' of October 1942

1. SR de Limoges 24 octobre 1941, no.38, pp.323-324
2. AN F17 13390, Letter of Bonnard to Rastouil, 2 December 1943. This may also be found in AN F17 13341 and SR de Limoges 21 janvier 1944, no.2, p.10
3. AN F17 13320, circular of 7 April 1941
4. SR d'Aix 3 août 1941, no.31, pp.341-344
brought with it numerous difficulties over the right time for the catechism.' Most embarrassingly of all, for both the Church and the government, were problems at Vichy itself. Here, in autumn 1942, the Primary Inspector for the Allier and the headmaster of the Ecole Jules Ferry turned down a request from the 'curé' of St-Louis to allow the catechism to be taught between 2 and 2.15 pm each schoolday. This time was too inconvenient, they argued; another would have to be found. It quickly was. As soon as the matter came to the attention of Pétain's Cabinet Civil, a fudged solution was speedily concocted and the affair hushed up. Yet incidents like these appear to have been rare. As a whole the impression is that France was spared an open battle between 'curé' and 'instituteur' over the catechism, and that the situation reverted to the uneasy compromise that had existed before the laws of 6 January 1941 and 10 March 1941.

While it may be that a major crisis had been averted, Carcopino did not believe this was enough. As a moderate Catholic and a great classical scholar, he was a man who liked to please all sides and offend no-one. Thus he was anxious to draw 'curé' and 'instituteur' together. After a period of open hostility to the teachers, then one of open disagreement over their ideological position, he wished to see a new era, one of reconciliation. This he outlined in his speech to the nation

1. SR de Lyon 17 octobre 1942, no.47, p.525
2. AN 2 AG 493 CC75 A, Letter from Pétain's Cabinet Civil (unsigned) to General Inspector of Primary Education (Allier), 23 October 1942
of 16 March 1941 which explained at length why he had found it necessary to revoke Chevalier's legislation. In this he conjured up the image of a united France, 'l'instituteur à son école, le curé à son église, l'instituteur ami du curé. C'est cette pensée qui m'anime et s'il est une chance pour le curé d'attirer l'instituteur à l'église, elle s'évanouira si on commence par faire entrer le curé dans l'école au nom de la loi.' Through this understanding, Carcopino claimed, a new fraternity would prevail.

In the same speech Carcopino promised more than just words by announcing his intention of bringing to an end all punitive measures against teachers. Chevalier, taking full advantage of the powers accorded to him by the laws affecting public employees, freemasonry and the SNI, had dismissed at least one hundred teachers with several other cases pending. Carcopino promised to wind up these investigations within the month either confirming or revoking the findings of his predecessor. Carcopino proclaimed that teachers now understood their role in society and in the regeneration of France. 'Je suis sûr', he announced, 'que l'immense majorité des instituteurs l'ont déjà compris et ne demandent qu'à se consacrer corps et âme à l'oeuvre de régénération.' They had repudiated sectarianism to have become 'les artisans responsables du redressement national.'

1. Carcopino's speech of 16 March 1941 contained in RR de Rodez 28 mars 1941, no.13, p.110

2. ibid
To promote further the mood of reconciliation and mutual tolerance, Carcopino was later to set up special camps to be attended by priests and teachers during the summer vacations. In these Carcopino hoped to recreate the atmosphere of understanding of Prisoner of War camps in Germany where priests and teachers had allegedly forgotten their past differences. Certainly the experiences of imprisonment could facilitate a closer union between the old rivals. After the war, one 'instituteur' recalled the role played at Dachau by Georges Lapierre, founder of L'Ecole Libératrice in 1929, 'Grâce à lui nous n'avions plus d'adversaires. Persuadés profondément que la France ne pourrait se refaire que dans la fraternité et dans la plus large union, il entamait des conversations avec les représentatifs de l'église.' Similarly, a priest admitted after the occupation, 'C'est en captivité que j'ai été touché par la grâce de la laïcité.'

As a more limited gesture of reconciliation affecting secondary education, Carcopino introduced a law of 26 May 1941 which made it easier for Catholic schools to employ State teachers. This abrogated article 71 of the Loi des Finances of 30 March 1902 which had stripped State 'professeurs' of their pension rights if they taught in a Catholic school.


2. ibid p.66
'collège', and refused them the opportunity to return to the State system.' These restrictions had particularly hit prestigious Catholic institutions like the Collège Stanislas, Collège Sévigné and the Ecole Alsacienne, which were anxious to recruit the best of State 'agrégés'. Accordingly, the Church warmly welcomed Carcopino's reform. As La Croix of 30 May 1941 put it, this was an important move towards 'une collaboration profitable entre l'enseignement public et l'enseignement libre.'

Yet how did the Church as a whole accept Carcopino's gestures of reconciliation? After all, many Catholics had been bitterly disappointed by the rescinding of Chevalier's legislation on the catechism. Furthermore, this was very much an initiative coming from within the government itself. Apart from a limited discussion with Cardinal Suhard in Paris in January 1941, there appears to have been no consultation. Even so, the reaction of the hierarchy was welcoming. Only a few days after Carcopino's message, Mgr Feltin, archbishop of Bordeaux, expressed his desire to see the establishment of an 'entente cordiale' between priest and teacher in every township. 'L'un et l'autre', he proclaimed, 'ont une mission magnifique: celle d'élever une jeunesse sur qui repose

1. AN AJ 40 557, 'Note relative à la loi du 26 mai 1941 (no.2254) (Fonctionnaires de l'Enseignement public détachés dans des établissements privés) 16 juin 1941'
2. AN F17 13346, 'Note sur le détachement de professeurs dans l'enseignement libre, 3 juillet 1944'
3. La Croix 30 mai 1941
toult l'espoir de la France.' As such they had cause not to argue but to co-operate. He thus urged his priests in the Gironde to respond to the wishes of the government and begin a warm relationship with the local schoolteacher.' Later, on 24 July 1941, the ACA, meeting in the occupied zone, echoed Feltin's and Carcopino's sentiments. Wishing to see agreement quickly reached over the timetabling of the catechism, the ACA declared that in the present hour the 'rapprochement' between the clergy and members of the teaching profession was more necessary than ever.*

But the extent to which the hierarchy really understood the problems of reconciliation remains questionable. Certainly a small number had been campaigning for a long time for a better understanding with the 'instituteurs'. In 1931, Mgr Saliège had commanded his priests in the diocese of Toulouse, 'Je vous interdis d'attaquer l'instituteur et l'école publique. Comme vous, l'instituteur a charge de l'éducation des enfants de France. C'est fou, c'est criminel que les éducateurs se combattent, se haïssent. Il faut la paix scolaire. Vous, prêtres, vous devez être les premiers à travailler à cette paix.'® But others did not possess the same breadth of vision. Brought up in a different age and long removed from the concerns of village politics, they saw the

1. La Vie Catholique p.26
2. ibid p.64
3. Miguet Les Instituteurs et l'Eglise p.64
world of the 'instituteur' as a closed one. Nowhere better is this lack of comprehension expressed than in the case of Cardinal Suhard. On 13 January 1941 Suhard had mentioned to Dodier his desire to see a new harmony established between 'curé' and 'instituteur'. Suhard reminisced about his own childhood in the little village of Brains-sur-les-Marches in Western France. There the teacher and priest had always tipped their hats to one another, had always agreed on the teaching of the catechism and were both well-respected members of the community. Why, questioned Suhard, could not such a world be recreated? In reply Dodier tactfully pointed out to the Cardinal that he had probably learnt his catechism during the early 1880s before the law of 1886, when the teacher was still paid by the commune and had, more likely than not, sung in the church choir at the time of Guizot. It was, remarked Dodier, since then - since the laws of 1886, 1901 and 1905 - that the present troubles had begun.

Given this lack of understanding on the part of some of the hierarchy, it is interesting to see how the policy of reconciliation was to be interpreted by other Catholics. For the traditional Right of the Church, represented by such bodies as the FNC, it appears to have curried little favour. Throughout 1941 *La France Catholique* led a hostile campaign against teachers, emphasizing their links with

1. Dodier *A la Recherche de la Paix Scolaire* p.16 et seq
freemasonry. Imitating the practice of the *Journal Officiel* it was to publish huge lists of past masons involved in education, some only members of a Lodge for a year, others retired from teaching altogether and who had, in all probability, not attended a masonic function for several years.' It was a vindictive campaign that made the job of moderate Catholics, anxious for reconciliation, the more difficult. It was hard to convince teachers of the hierarchy's good will when they were being publicly lambasted by the Catholic press. Teachers were naturally suspicious. Yet ironically it was probably Carcopino himself who did most to undermine the policy of reconciliation he so ardently desired by the introduction of the law of 2 November 1941 granting subsidies to Catholic primary schools.

Broadly speaking subsidies provoked conflict between 'cure' and 'instituteur' on two counts. First, subventions provided Catholic education with a prosperity it had hitherto not known at a time when State schools were suffering increasingly from material shortages. As Bonnard complained to Lavagne on 27 February 1943, Catholic schools were the beneficiaries of a regime of national subventions whereas many State schools had become entirely dependent on the proceeds of the

1. *La France Catholique* 20 novembre 1941
Caisse des Ecoles for their upkeep. This caused deep resentment on the part of the State 'instituteurs'. They were particularly incensed that the inadequacies of State inspection of subsidized Catholic schools meant that many were receiving more assistance than they were entitled to. As a report of 6 June 1944 put it,

L'absence de contrôle entretient parmi les membres de l'Enseignement Public un état de malaise et d'inquiétude. L'école privée dont on ignore la vie réelle et en qui on voit que le bénéficiaire d'une mesure de faveur apparaît comme une rivale. Bien plus le personnel de l'Enseignement Public interprète la politique bienveillante de l'Etat à l'égard de l'Enseignement Privé comme le signe d'une défiance à son propre endroit, et, dans l'esprit de certains, l'espérance d'une revanche s'est installé.

The report concluded that more control was required on the part of the Academy Inspectors if this situation was to be remedied.

Secondly, and more importantly, subsidies created friction because they facilitated the rapid growth of Catholic elementary schools, especially in the West and parts of the Midi. As will be seen in Chapter Nine, subsidies encouraged a massive recruitment campaign by the Church to draw pupils away from State education. Particular pressure was now on

1. AN 2 AG 496 CC78 A, Letter of Bonnard to Lavagne, 27 February 1943
2. AN F17 13390, Report of General Inspector Garonne to Bonnard, 6 June 1944
the Church to enrol 20 pupils in each of its schools. This was the magic figure which the law of 2 November 1941 had stipulated for subsidies. Moreover, it also appears that the Church was deflecting subsidies from their original purpose of only helping schools in need, and using them to set up new ones instead. Again this provoked bitter resentment among the 'instituteurs' as it could mean they were put out of a job. The damaging effects the creation of a new Catholic school could have on a small community were recounted by Serge Jeanneret in an article in Le Matin of 15 April 1943. He told the story of a small town in Brittany where there had long since only been an 'école publique'. Both the 'instituteur' and his wife were upright members of the community. They took no part in politics and went to church each Sunday. Yet recently, Jeanneret continued, the 'curé' had opened an 'école libre'. Denouncing the 'instituteur' from the pulpit, the 'curé' had subsequently drawn away all his pupils with the result that the 'école publique' had had to close down. Although many parents went secretly to the 'instituteur' to express their regrets and admiration for his teaching abilities, they explained that they dare not go against the 'curé'. As Jeanneret concluded, such episodes were now common in several parts of France giving vent to anticlerical squabbles not seen in many places since the turn of the century.

Ultimately, then, it was this renewed rivalry between Catholic and

1. AN F17 13341, Press cutting from Le Matin 15 avril 1943
State schools that undermined the policies of reconciliation envisaged by Carcopino. Thereafter, the relationship between the Church and the 'instituteurs' was one of unease and uncertainty. There was little talk of reconciliation. The coming to power of Bonnard meant that there was little attempt to accommodate all shades of opinion. In his many addresses to State teachers, no allusion was made to the attitude they should adopt in regard to the clergy. Similarly few clerics spoke out in favour of reconciliation. While Cardinal Gerlier made an impassioned plea in August 1943 for union between the 'instituteur public' and 'privé', others were so encouraged by the increase in the 'effectifs' of Catholic schools that they began to forget their earlier concern for harmony. For example, a note of 19 October 1943 reported that the Church hierarchy had taken a low opinion of the General Secretary of the Frères Ignorantins precisely because he had spoken out in favour of union with 'enseignement public'. In turn, several bishops had ensured that a minimum of subsidies were received by the Frères and that the money went to schools run by local priests instead.

This diversity of interests is a long way removed from the summer of 1940 when Catholics had been united in their hatred of teachers. As we

1. Many of these messages may be found in Bonnard Les Messages de M. Abel Bonnard
2. AN 2 AG 128 SP60 A, Press cutting from La Garonne 11 août 1943, entitled 'Le Cardinal et les Instituteurs'
3. AN F17 13341, 'Note sur les Frères Ignorantins', 19 October 1943
have seen, the Church had then found itself at one with Vichy and together they had inaugurated a number of hostile measures against the teachers. The fact that these policies gave birth to a clerical campaign in the countryside, reviving old antagonisms, was of little concern. But, by the end of 1940, the Church had begun to realise, as had Vichy, that perhaps a more constructive policy was needed if teachers were ever to be the true servants of a new France. Here, however, agreement with the government was harder to reach and the Church, through Chevalier's assistance, had forced the pace unduly expecting to alter the teachers' attitudes to religion overnight. Only Carcopino's foresight and Vichy's fears for national unity averted a crisis in the countryside over the catechism. In turn, to patch up any possible damage, a fresh phase of reconciliation was entered into from March 1941. But it was never to take root. The question of subsidies came too quickly and proved, as so often in the past, that material questions rather than ideological ones were the more divisive in the village. Whether or not relations between priest and teacher ever did improve after November 1941, subsidies would remain a highly sensitive issue.

Looking at the numerous phases through which the relationship between Church and teachers went in the course of the Vichy regime, it is difficult to see what the Church had achieved or gained. Certainly it had its moment of revenge against such evils as freemasonry and the SNI. But it had not succeeded in fundamentally changing the ideological position of teachers, especially in regard to their religious
neutrality. It is hard to believe that the profession was any less irreligious or anticlerical in 1944 than in 1940. Instead much of what the Church had done revived old quarrels, intensifying anticlericalism. This is especially true of the countryside. Here the traditional hostility between 'curé' and 'instituteur' was largely beginning to fade by 1940 only to be given a further lease of life under Vichy. In doing this the Church was not entirely to blame. But ultimately it would pay the price. In the throes of the Liberation it would suddenly discover the roles of 1940 reversed, and find itself the target of national and local denunciations at the hands of State teachers, and a newly reconstituted SNI.
Part Four

THE FUNDING OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

When Church leaders raised the question of State aid to Catholic schools, such claims were, of course, nothing new. They dated back to the secularist legislation of the 1880s, in particular the law on 'gratuité' of 29 June 1881 and that on 'obligation' of 23 March 1892. Universal free schooling provided by the State, against the Church discriminated against Catholic parents as they now had to pay twice over to send their children to a Catholic school, once through fees to the local authority, and second, through donations to the 'école religieuse'. This was considered an interference with the rights of a parent to place his children in a school of his own choice. As the Church was wary of early age and parents would be unlikely to accept two separate taxation systems, it would opt for the free State school. However, the Church never saw 'gratuité' as anything more than onerousness. Apart from providing 'gratuité', moreover, the parents are thought until the Second Republic to continue to make the sacrifices in order to send their children to a Catholic school. After all, they were an important and sensible minority. Between the wars the maintained sector was more than a fifth of the school population and a proportion that was often much higher at a regional level, especially in eastern France. That the Church continued to educate such a large percentage of children within elementary education required a formidable drain on its resources. Yet, unlike the Third Republic, none of this was forthcoming. In fact, of 31 October 1905, establishing the statute of 'assistance'
When Church leaders came to present their demands to the Vichy government in 1940, high on their agenda was the question of State subsidies to Catholic schools. Such claims were, of course, nothing new. They dated back to the secularist legislation of the 1880s, in particular the law on 'gratuité' of 16 June 1881 and that on 'obligation' of 28 March 1882. Universal free schooling provided by the State, argued the Church, discriminated against Catholic parents as they now had to pay twice over to send their children to a Catholic school, once through fees to the 'école privée', and, second, through taxation to the 'école publique'. This was considered to interfere with the rights of a father to place his children in a school of his own choice. As the Church was quick to point out, many parents would be unable, or unwilling, to pay both fees and taxation, and would opt for the free State school instead. Indeed, the Church never saw 'gratuité' as anything more than an underhand means of promoting 'laïcité'. Furthermore, the system was thought unfair on those parents who continued to make the sacrifices to afford the fees for a Catholic school. After all, they were an important and sizeable minority. Between the wars they maintained over one million pupils a year in Catholic elementary schools, one fifth of the school population, and a proportion that was often much higher at a regional level, especially in Western France.

That the Church continued to educate such a large percentage of children within elementary education remained a formidable argument for State assistance. But, under the Third Republic, none was forthcoming. The law of 20 October 1886, establishing the statute of 'enseignement
primeire' excluded private schools from public funds, a principle further reinforced by the law of Separation in 1905. In turn, the financing of Catholic schools was placed on a precarious footing. Debarred from receiving any State assistance at either a local or a national level, they became dependent on the generosity of private benefactors; the profits of fund-raising events; the willingness of their teachers to accept low wages; and, ever increasingly, upon parental fees.

To try and alleviate the growing financial burdens that befell Catholic parents, the Church advocated a system of 'répartition proportionelle scolaire' (RPS), whereby the national budget was divided between pupils in private and public education in proportion to the numbers in each. Because such a scheme was considered to protect the rights of a father to select a school of his own choice, both within primary and secondary education, RPS won considerable support before 1914 among a number of Catholic groups, most notably the ACJF. After the war, the ACJF again took up the demand, as did the ACA in 1919. Yet RPS faced a number of obstacles. Firstly disagreement existed as to the best means for its implementation. Should subsidies be administered to individual families by way of 'allocations familiales' or to the schools themselves. Secondly, and more importantly, the scheme faced considerable parliamentary opposition. When in 1921 Baudry d'Asson, the monarchist deputy from the Vendée, proposed granting subsidies to parents with children in Catholic secondary schools, he failed

1. Talbott The Politics of Educational Reform p.53
to win a majority. Not only did he encounter fierce opposition from Republicans wedded to the ideals of 'laïcité', he also failed to command the unanimous support of Catholic deputies, many of whom were worried lest they upset the religious peace that had existed since 1918 and interrupted attempts to re-open the French embassy at the Vatican."

Despite this major setback, the Church continued to press for subsidies, concentrating its efforts on building up public support outside of parliament. In 1922 Cardinal Dubois of Paris gave his blessing to a national campaign for RPS orchestrated by the Société d'Education. But this was to enjoy little support outside of Paris itself. Rather it encouraged a vigorous counter-attack by such secularist bodies as the Ligue des Droits de l'Homme, the Ligue de l'Enseignement and the SNI. Consequently, by 1929 the Catholic campaign for RPS was coming to a halt. In the 1930s it was left to Catholic pressure groups to demand a more equitable distribution of wealth within education.

The most important of these movements was the Association des Parents d'Elèves de l'Enseignement Libre (APEL). This was founded on 22 February 1930 by Eugène Bresson, a Catholic secondary school teacher from Marseille.

He believed that all parents should enjoy the inalienable right to have their children educated in a school of their own choice. To accomplish this, Bresson advocated a system of RPS for secondary education. This message proved popular. By October 1933 APEL had a membership of 20,000 and had branches in nearly every diocese. Nor did APEL draw its support exclusively from Catholic circles. Although it had strong ties with the Church, it professed to be a non-confessional movement. In Montpellier and Paris it had some success in recruiting Protestant parents. Yet despite this broad appeal, APEL accomplished little during the 1930s. The real testing ground for subsidies remained in parliament, and here Catholic deputies continued to entertain serious doubts. Abbé Desgranges recalls that when in March 1939 Pius XII, on Suhard's initiative, asked the Catholic Senators de Leusse and Pernot about the possibility of RPS, they replied it was too dangerous and fraught with

1. H. Baudriet L'APEL ou L'Association des Élèves de l'Enseignement Secondaire Libre (Marseille, Editions Publiroc, 1930) p. 13 et seq
2. AN F17 14183, Police report of 10 October 1933
difficulties. The maintenance of religious unity still remained uppermost in most deputies' minds.¹

The coming of the war, however, swept away many of these reservations and added a new urgency to Catholic demands. With the division of France into two, together with the imposition of rationing and the ensuing shortages, Church leaders immediately foresaw that many of their traditional sources of revenue would quickly dry up. As La Croix du Cantal of 27 July 1941 pointed out, 'Les initiatives de la charité - kermesses, quêtes, fêtes, etc... sont à peu près impossibles dans les circonstances où la patrie est plongée', ² and added that not even during the darkest days of the Popular Front had Catholic schools been so menaced.³ Indeed, the Church was anxious about the very survival of its schools. Mgr Guerry claims that as early as November 1940 many were faced with closure.⁴ Later, after the war, anticlericals disputed this and accused the Church of having exaggerated its plight in order to obtain subsidies from the

2. La Croix du Cantal 27 juillet 1941
3. Mgr Guerry L'Église Catholique p.319
Vichy government. Yet such allegations need to be qualified. Although not all dioceses were equally affected, it does not appear that the Church overstated its financial difficulties.

Worst hit were those areas in the occupied zone, particularly in Northern France, where fighting had been heaviest. Here in early 1940, Cardinal Liénart was so troubled by the shortage of funds for Catholic schools in the Nord and Pas-de-Calais that he wrote to the government requesting assistance. On 2 March Jean Zay replied that the matter had not gone unnoticed, but no action was taken. Later in June 1940, when Lille found itself cut off from the rest of France, Liénart again asked for support, this time successfully from the Prefect of the Nord. Fearing a huge influx of Catholic pupils into the already over-crowded State establishments should Church schools go under, the Prefect, acting on his own initiative, forwarded a loan of one million francs to help pay Catholic teachers whose salaries were badly in arrears. When the Prefect was unable to repeat the loan at the end of the

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1. G. Cogniot 'Les Subventions à l'Enseignement Confessionnelle', in La Pensée, nouvelle série, no. 3, avril-mai-juin 1945
2. Letter of Zay to Liénart, 2 March 1940, quoted in Deroo L'Episcopat Français p. 105
3. AN F17 13390, Letter of Pierre Cathala to Pétain, 1 June 1942, gives details of the Prefect's initiative
year, Liénart sent an envoy, Abbé Prévost, to Vichy in January 1941 to impress upon the government the desperateness of the situation and the need for further regional aid. But while Pétain himself took a personal interest in the affair, the matter was quietly put aside by the Ministry of the Interior, which was anxious not to set a precedent for future subventions.

Elsewhere too in the North, Catholic schools struggled to make ends meet. As in the Nord and Pas-de-Calais, the Church authorities in the Parisian region and the Seine-Inférieure found difficulty in paying their teachers, and resorted to employing religious orders instead, not just because they were allowed to teach again following the law of 3 September 1940, but because they commanded minimal salaries. Similar steps were taken in the Orne and other Western departments, where the situation was generally bad. When in November 1940 a conference of bishops from the West gathered at Angers to present their greetings to Pétain, they added that the current material threat to their schools was greater than that ever posed by the secularist legislation of the 1880s. Indeed, numerous stories abounded in the West about the problems being faced by Catholic education. As in other parts of the occupied zone, the requisitioning of

1. AN 2 AG 493 CC74 C, 'Note 28 janvier 1941' for Ministre Secrétaire d'État à l'Intérieur (Cabinet)

2. AN 2 AG 496 CC78 A, Letter of Jardel, Secrétaire Général du Chef de l'État, to Mgr Chappoulie, 20 May 1943

3. AN 2 AG 493 CC 74 B, Letter of bishops of Western France to Pétain, 20 November 1940
schools by German troops proved a perennial problem. Despite claims by the local representative of the Rassemblement National Populaire (RNP), based at Saint-Brieuc, that, on the request of the Church and French authorities, only State schools in the West were being requisitioned, this was from being the case. By July 1941 at Vannes in the Morbihan, out of a total of 31 schools, 18 public and 13 private, 14 were entirely occupied, 8 public and 6 private, and 6 partially occupied, 2 public and 4 private. Requisitioning could entail huge costs in damages and even permanent closure. Often it was only through the superhuman efforts of a school's authorities that it would be kept open by holding lessons in whatever buildings were available. For example, at one girl's school at Beuzeville in the Eure, occupied by German troops since 25 June 1940, the 'directrice' reported on 30 March 1942, 'Pour maintenir l'école ouverte, nous sommes réduites à faire nos classes dans chambres à coucher, atelier, garage, bien trop étroits pour la centaine d'enfants fréquentant l'école, et sans autre issue que la rue.' Such conditions, she complained, meant that her pupils never received any fresh air and were reduced to working in distressing conditions.

1. AN F17 13390, Letter of Albertini, Secrétaire Général du RNP, to Néret, Chef du Secrétariat Particulier de M.le Ministre de l'Education Nationale, 24 October 1942

2. AN AJ 40 565, Academy Inspector of the Morbihan to Carcopino, 11 July 1941

3. AN F17 13390, Letter of the 'directrice' of the Ecole Privée de Filles de Beuzeville (Eure) to Délgué Général du Gouvernement Français, 30 March 1942
For the time being, at least, the southern unoccupied zone was unaffected by the problems of requisitioning. Yet the Church was fully aware that the situation could only get worse. Fund-raising events, on which several schools were dependent, were neither as profitable nor as plentiful as in the past; nor could the Church any longer provide as much assistance to parents who found it hard to pay school fees. In May 1940 the Caisse des Allocations Familiales de l'Enseignement Privé et des Cultes de la Région Sud-Est, which helped families with the cost of such things as fees, school books and uniforms, reported that payments had been severely disrupted by the war. More worrying still, the organisation had inherited a 70,000F deficit for the previous year. Other charitable bodies faced growing difficulties. The Comité des Ecoles Catholiques de Lyon, responsible for the partial upkeep of schools in the region, saw its budget fall from 263,500F in 1941 to 210,051F in 1942, although this was still better than the 132,500F received in 1940, understandably a bad year. But despite this slight increase the Comité still expected a number of schools to close. Consequently, Cardinal Gerlier was an indefatigable supporter of subsidies. In July 1940 he declared that Catholic schools would play an important role in the 'renaissance nationale' only if they were granted

1. SR de Viviers, 16 août 1940, no.33, pp.329-331

2. The budgets for the Comité des Ecoles Catholiques de Lyon are to be found in the following issues of the SR de Lyon, 13 février 1942, p.120 and 25 décembre/1 janvier 1942/43, nos.5-6, p.49
State subsidies,¹ and took up the matter with Pétain that month.² His efforts did not go unrewarded. At the beginning of 1941 Pétain forwarded a cheque for 100,000F towards the running of Catholic schools in the Southern zone. As in the North this unexpected windfall was used to pay Catholic teachers.

We may see, therefore, that the Church's concern for the future of its schools was overwhelmingly genuine. Faced with an impending crisis in the North, a desperate situation in the West and ever-mounting problems in the South, State assistance was regarded as an absolute necessity. Yet somewhat ironically the material difficulties facing Catholic schools had strengthened their case for subsidies. The Church could now argue, as had Liénart to the Prefect of the Nord, that should Catholic schools have to close, then State establishments would be inundated by Catholic pupils. As Emmanuel Lucien-Brun, President of the Comité des Ecoles Catholiques de Lyon, pointed out in February 1941, State assistance to Catholic schools would in fact be an economy for 'si ... les écoles étaient supprimées, la création des écoles pour les remplacer et l'appel à de nouveaux maîtres pour y enseigner ... imposeraient des dépenses importantes.'³ Indeed, just a brief glance at the numbers in private schools gives a good indication

1. La Croix 19 juillet 1940
2. AN 2 AG 493 CC74 B, Letter of Gerlier to Pétain, 7 February 1941, gives details of this initiative
3. Letter of Emmanuel Lucien-Brun to Gerlier, February 1941, contained in SR de Lyon, 14 février 1941, no.12, pp.133
of the potential burden Catholic pupils posed to the already over-stretched State system. In October 1940 *La Croix du Dimanche* gave the figures of students in Catholic establishments as 4,219 in 'enseignement supérieur', 160,000 in 'enseignement secondaire', and a staggering 1,061,000 in 'enseignement primaire', an overall total of 1,225,219. What would happen, inferred *La Croix du Dimanche*, if Catholic schools were to close. Bitterly it added:

L'Ecole laïque légale recevrait: trois milliards, 817 millions 132,648 francs (IO du décembre 1937)

L'Ecole libre légale: 0 francs, 0 centimes.

Let us hope, concluded the article, that soon a parity will be established between the funding of public and private education, and between the financial burdens that fall on parents.

This argument also had a regional dimension. In those Western departments where the Church educated a majority of the population, Catholics saw no reason why they should be forced to contribute to the upkeep of their local State schools. According to *La Semaine Religieuse de Belley* this was the case at Bourg. Here the numbers of girls alone in Catholic schools far outweighed all those in State establishments. Should

1. *La Croix du Dimanche* 6 octobre 1940
2. SR de Belley 14 août 1941, no.33, pp.279-280
'enseignement libre' have to close down because of material shortages this would put a heavy burden on the State system. In this situation, it was argued, the government had an overriding duty to come to the assistance of 'enseignement libre' and reward the efforts of Catholic families. Others took this argument a step further. From one town in Western France came the suggestion that the government should shut down all State schools which taught less than 20 per cent of the local population and re-direct their funds to Catholic education. This was a sure way, it was claimed, of making economies and of safeguarding the rights of the family.

This constant reference to the rights of the family echoed Catholic criticisms before the war, and was to become a mainstay in Church arguments for subsidies under Vichy. Catholics continually referred to the fact that parents paid twice over for their children's education in taxation and fees, and that this interfered with the rights of a parent to send his children to a school of his own choice. As Lemarcand, the President of APEL, recalled to Pétain in 1940, 'Nous disons surtout que la famille a le droit d'élever ses enfants et de les orienter dans la vie, entretenant avec l'école des relations suivies de collaboration et de contrôle, sans que nul tente de la déposséder de ce qui est l'essentiel de sa mission.' Later in July 1941, the ACA for the occupied zone took up the same

1. AN 2 AG 613 CM30 B, 'Note sur l'enseignement dans l'Ouest' by M. de la F..., 1941
2. Letter of Lemarcand to Pétain, no date (July 1940?), in SR de Viviers, 9 août 1940, no.32, p.327
theme claiming that the heroic efforts of Christian families to send their children to confessional schools had become seriously threatened by the current financial difficulties. It was essential, they declared, that the State should provide 'allocations familiales' so these efforts would not go unaided. The implications of this argument were clear. If the State did not help, then Vichy could not hope for the revival of spiritual values confessional schools could bring about. As the ACA remarked, Catholic schools not only served 'les intérêts primordiaux et imprescriptibles des âmes, mais aussi les intérêts réels du pays.'

Through this appeal to the rights of the family, the Church touched a heartstring of the National Revolution. Pétain himself was deeply impressed by Catholic arguments, and was a ready champion of subsidies. Carcopino comments on Pétain in this regard, 'il était possédé par le rêve de restaurer en France les forces du christianisme et [que], s'il n'était revenu à temps à son rêve à la réalité, il eût écrasé l'église sous les poids énormes de ses faveurs...' Certainly every request made to Pétain for financial assistance was favourably received. When the unfortunate 'curé' of Coudekerque in the Nord found his school severely damaged by

1. Declaration of the ACA 24 July 1941 in La Vie Catholique p.64
2. ibid
3. Carcopino Souvenirs de Sept Ans p.318
occupying troops, it was Pétain who took a personal interest in the case.' Similarly those Catholic teachers who discovered themselves suddenly unemployed and without a pension, received a sympathetic hearing by the Marshal who sometimes sent small sums of money to alleviate their plight.  

Many Vichy Ministers shared Pétain's concern. Rivaud, for instance, was particularly touched by the precarious financing of 'enseignement libre', and spoke of the ridiculous situation in which the State maintained over a thousand schools in strongly Catholic areas, replete with 'instituteur' and 'institutrice', but with no pupils. Would it not be common-sensical, he inquired, to close these down and give the money to neighbouring Catholic schools? Nonetheless, while sympathetic, Rivaud was not as unreservedly enthusiastic about subsidies as Pétain, and urged extreme caution when approaching the issue. So too did early Vichy cabinets. Just as before the war, ministers were anxious not to disturb latent anticlericalism. In 1940, with the onus very much on preserving the fragile unity that surrounded Pétain, subsidies were regarded as just the sort of issue that might divide the nation. Furthermore, it was widely recognised that subsidies required a

1. AN F17 13365, 'Note' dated 30 March 1942 for Néret gives details of the situation of the 'curé' of Couderque
2. AN 2 AG 496 CC78 A, 'Dossier: Situation des Professeurs et Instituteurs Libre'
3. A.Rivaud 'L'Avenir de l'Enseignement Libre', in RDM 15 novembre 1941, p.146
good deal of planning and meticulous preparation, particularly with the
country part-occupied. There were numerous practical problems to be solved.
For example, where would the money come from: the Ministry of Education or
the Interior? Who should be in charge of administering subsidies? What form
should they take? As we shall see, these were not easy problems to
overcome.

Given these difficulties, it required the enthusiasm and religious
zeal of Chevalier to break the impasse and inaugurate the first measures
assisting Catholic schools. But as he was Minister of Education for such a
brief spell, these were of a limited nature, only facilitating restricted
local aid. Should Chevalier have survived in office then it is conceivable
that he would have attempted something more grandiose, maybe implementing
the Church's own proposals for EPS. But as it was, even his limited actions
provoked tension and urged further caution on the part of Vichy.

The first of these measures, taken by Chevalier while still secretary
general to Ripert, was the law of 15 October 1940 opening the Caisse des
Ecoles to Catholic pupils. This was a local charitable fund originally
established on a voluntary basis in 1867. Through donations made by the
commune and private individuals, the purpose of the Caisse was to help
poorer children with the cost of meals, clothing, shoes and books. Yet
since 1903 it had been open only to pupils of the public school. Now it was
available to all once again, Catholics rejoiced. La Croix du Dimanche of 17
November 1940 said of the law, 'Elle redresse une interprétation fausse de
l'esprit qui avait présidé à la création des caisse des
La Semaine Religieuse de Lyon echoed these sentiments, adding that the law was not just a victory for 'la justice scolaire', but meant Catholic schools were no longer subject to a form of 'discrédit officiel'. In particular, La Semaine Religieuse de Lyon was pleased by article 1 of the statute of the Caisse des Ecoles established by a circular of 8 February 1941 which allowed the Caisse to contribute for the first time to the 'frais de scolarité'. This was seen of great importance for l'application de cet article, ...aurait le double effet d'apporter une aide appréciable aux écoles les plus déshéritées, pourtant les plus intéressantes, puisqu'elles reçoivent le plus d'enfants pauvres, et en même temps de rendre à beaucoup de familles peu aisées, la liberté réelle du choix d'école.'

Nonetheless, the Church regarded the law of 15 October as insufficient because it could only provide limited assistance. While in certain towns, like Lyon with large concentrations of Catholic pupils, the local Caisse

1. La Croix du Dimanche 17 novembre 1940
2. SR de Lyon, 26 septembre 1941, no.44, p.492
3. AN F17 13319, 'Circulaire relative aux Caisse des Ecoles', 8 février 1941. Article 1 stated, 'La loi du 15 octobre 1940 a étendu l'action des caisses aux enfants qui fréquentent les écoles privées. Or, les frais de scolarité dans ces écoles représentent une lourde charge pour les familles auxquelles le Conseil d'Etat (arrêt Cabarsac 1925) a déjà admis que les communes pouvaient attribuer des secours d'études. Il faut donc prévoir parmi les moyens d'action des caisses, le paiement des frais de scolarité.
4. SR de Lyon 26 septembre 1941, no.44, p.492
could attract substantial donations from private benefactors of up to 700,000 F, elsewhere it was far less well endowed. Nor was the Caisse universal. Although it is not known how many existed in 1940-1941, a circular of 19 June 1941 reported that several communes had failed to fulfill the provisions of the law of 15 October establishing a Caisse Unique open to pupils in both private and public schools. In the Puy-de-Dôme, for instance, it is known that no more than half the communes possessed a Caisse by the end of 1941. The reasons for this are not hard to fathom. Firstly, problems arose as to the composition of the committees which administered the fund. These were supposed to include the Inspector of Primary Education, the mayor, a handful of teachers, two parents with pupils in the 'école publique', and two parents representing the 'école privée'. Yet this latter couple were to be designated by a parents' association such as APEL, which often did not possess a branch in the area. Although the parents' place was sometimes chosen instead by the headmaster of the 'école privée', this created numerous muddles and often hindered the establishment of the Caisse. Secondly, and more importantly, several communes were troubled by its potentially divisive effects. As Carcopino pointed out in March 1941, there was a danger that benefactors would cease

1. La Croix 11 septembre 1941
2. AN F17 13319, Circular of 19 June 1941 from Carcopino to Prefects and Academy Inspectors
4. SR de Montpellier 5 juillet 1941, no.27, Supplément
their donations if they thought they were going to Catholic pupils.\(^1\) Certainly the Caisse created rivalry and tension between schools. La Semaine Religieuse de Viviers inferred that because parents of the 'école publique' did not have to pay fees, they ought not to receive as much assistance.\(^2\) In any case, it complained, all the money went to State schools. As we will see, problems such as these eventually led Carcopino to restrict the Caisse to State pupils once more, and to institute a separate fund for Catholic schools.

Meanwhile Chevalier provided further aid through a law of 6 January 1941. This authorized communes, if they so chose, to subsidize the lighting, heating and canteens of confessional schools, as long as the unit cost of a Catholic pupil was lower than that of a student in the corresponding State school. In part, this law was simply the extension of what was going on in some regions. Already by September 1940 the prefects of the Drôme, Sarthe and Maine-et-Loire,\(^3\) touched by the plight of Catholic education, had allowed municipal councils to contribute to the heating and equipment bills of private schools. Likewise in Lyon the municipality had put aside money for the setting up of canteens frequented by needy children from both Catholic and public schools, which, by the end of 1941, were providing meals for over 15,000 pupils.\(^4\) But now the law of 6 January

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1. Carcopino Souvenirs de Sept Ans pp.301-302
2. SR de Viviers 11 avril 1941, no.15, p.136
3. La Croix 9 janvier 1941
4. La Croix 11 décembre 1941 and Le Nouvelliste 27 mars 1942
offered the chance of extending these initiatives, the Church was greatly encouraged. Whereas La Semaine Religieuse de Viviers described the measure as a 'simple justice', the La Semaine Religieuse de l'Archdiocèse d'Aix saw it as a positive step in the task of national revival, and important for the formation of 'une jeunesse nouvelle'.

Even so, the Church had several reservations about communal subventions, many of which reflected those about the Caisse. Once more only large towns could provide substantial aid. In Paris, for example, the Prefect reported in 1941 that 5,000,000F had been granted by communes to the 22,000 children in Catholic schools, no small sum if one thinks that under the regime of national subventions, established by the law of 2 November 1941, the Seine received 30,000,000F. Yet communes elsewhere could not hope to be as forthcoming especially when many were already struggling to keep the public schools in their charge. Nor did the law of 6 January put them under any obligation to assist Catholic schools, although again it is not known how many were unprepared to do so. Nonetheless, those which did not, often found themselves the target of Church criticism, especially in strongly Catholic areas. When the commune of Plougonven in the Finistère refused to contribute to the cost of heating

1. SR de Viviers 7 février 1941, no.6, p.44
2. SR d'Aix 23 février 1941, no.8, p.91
3. SR de Lyon 26 septembre 1941, no.44, p.493
4. AN F17 13365, 'Note sur les Subventions aux Ecoles Privées' no date (1942??)
of the local 'école confessionnelle', it was accused of betraying the National Revolution.' So too was the mayor of Dunkerque. La Vie Catholique du Berry described his decision not to permit a commune to partake in the purchase of school equipment for Catholic pupils as branding children in private education 'les petits Français de seconde zone.'

Likewise other measures taken by Chevalier received a mixed response. On 25 February 1941 Catholic pupils were allowed to compete with State pupils for national scholarships in secondary schools, whereas by a decree of 11 March 1941 they could take part in the Concours Général. For La Semaine Religieuse de Paris these were measures of equality, yet Catholics still retained their doubts and suspicions. Many were worried about possible discrimination as candidates had to state in advance whether they were applying to a Catholic or State school. Maybe there was something in these fears as a circular of 24 May 1941 reminded Rectors in no uncertain terms that there should be no distinction made between children applying for a 'bourse', whatever school they attended.

For the Church, then, these initial measures, while welcome, did not go

1. AN 72 AJ 1863, Press cutting from Le Progrès de Finistère 25 octobre 1941
2. VC du Berry 15 mars 1941, no.11, p.174
3. SR de Paris 4 octobre 1941, no.4568, p.219
4. AN F17 13319, Circular of Carcopino to Rectors 24 May 1941
far enough. They did not touch the deeper financial problems of Catholic schools. As the bishop of Sainte-Claude stated in July 1941, although some progress had been made towards 'la liberté d'enseignement', parents were still struggling to pay fees and Catholic teachers remained badly paid.' But, even more worrying, the Church realised that with Chevalier no longer Minister of Education, after March 1941 it could not depend on initiatives coming from within the Vichy government itself. Of Carcopino there was a good deal of hope but little certainty.

Outwardly at least Carcopino appeared sympathetic to the question of aid. In his speech to the nation of 16 March 1941, he had argued that 'liberté de conscience' should not just be the preserve of those who could afford to send their children to a Catholic school. He added, 'Le droit du père de famille pauvre à préférer pour ses fils l'école confessionnelle à l'école laïque doit être reconnu par la loi.' But while Carcopino genuinely believed this, he was concerned not to disturb the religious peace any further following the bitter quarrels stirred up by Chevalier's legislation on the catechism and the 'devoirs envers Dieu'. He had earlier expounded on this reasoning at the Council of Ministers of 7 March 1941. There Carcopino stated that he had no wish to see Catholic schools close for want of funds, but that it was also

1. *RR de Rodez* 25 juillet 1941, no.30, p.245

2. Extracts of Carcopino's speech of 16 March 1941 quoted in a booklet by APEL *Allocations Familiales Écolières* (Paris, Union Nationale des APEL, 1941) contained in AN 2 AG 496 CC78 A

3. Carcopino *Souvenirs de Sept Ans* p.302
the overriding duty of government not to divide the nation through hasty and ill-thought out legislation. Thus, while he accepted the principle of aid, he had numerous reservations about its practical implementation. Certainly he doubted the wisdom of Chevalier's laws on the Caisse des Ecoles and communal subventions. The provision of money by local bodies, he believed, was the surest way of provoking antagonism, although for the time being he did not propose any change. Yet neither did he make any suggestions for more substantial aid. Rather he advocated that the government should bide its time, and carefully weigh up the recommendations put to it. Consequently, in March 1941 the onus was very much on the Church itself to come up with solutions and make its representations to the government.

Among the first of these was that made by APEL on 17 April 1941. In a brochure forwarded to Vichy, the parents' body argued for a voucher system of 'allocations familiales'. APEL's argument began with the familiar catalogue of Catholic complaints about how the heavy financial burdens that fell on families interfered with their rights to send their children to a school of their own choice. To restore these rights, APEL advocated that primary education should be made free to all parents. Every parent would receive 'allocations familiales' from the State in the form of a voucher, a 'bon scolaire'. These vouchers would be allocated for each child and would enable the parents to place their

1. AN 2 AG 496 CC78 A, APEL Allocations Familiales Scolaires (Paris, Union Nationale des APEL, 1941)
children in whatever school, public or private, they preferred. The 'bon' itself would be paid monthly and be administered by the mayor. Its value would be non-negotiable and be established by the Minister of Education and the Minister of Family and Health. Furthermore, APEL demanded that such things as canteens, school buses and sports grounds which the State made freely available to its own 'écoles primaires' should be extended to the 'école libre'.

As to secondary education, APEL argued that this should be fee-paying in both the private and public sector. This would ensure equality between all and be in accord with the ideals of the National Revolution. Nonetheless, APEL proposed that grants be made available for bright children and for those from large families. APEL even devised a sliding scale by which families of three children or more would be entitled to 'allocations familiales', although once again the actual amount was to be fixed by the government. Finally, these proposals ended with a rousing appeal to the values of the National Revolution in its struggle against intellectualism, and in its support of 'l'esprit familial' and 'culte du travail'.

Shortly after being sent these suggestions, Carcopino received another set of proposals for a voucher system from Joseph Toulemonde. An emissary of Cardinal Liénart, Toulemonde was an important industrialist from Roubaix, the president of the Association Roubaisienne d'Eduction et d'Enseignement, and a representative of the Comité des Ecoles Libres de Roubaix. Received at Vichy on 3 May 1941 by Paul Ourliac, 'chef adjoint' to Carcopino's cabinet, Toulemonde followed up his visit
by a letter to Pétain of 15 May.' In this, he put forward the traditional argument that since 1882 Catholic parents had been paying double for their children's education. In turn, he claimed Christian families had been treated like 'les Français de seconde zone.' Yet should the one million or more pupils that had been estimated to comprise 'enseignement primaire libre' in 1938 be going to public schools, then each pupil would now be costing the State 1300F a year, an annual total of some 1,300,000,000F. Strict justice, maintained Toulemonde, should entail that families who confided their children to private schools be awarded a subvention of 1,300-1,400F for every one of their offspring. Yet Toulemonde recognised that this would be too much to ask at a time when the country was part-occupied and the government short of funds. Therefore, he proposed that families should receive 'bons scolaires'. Yet, unlike APEL, Toulemonde's scheme only advocated granting these vouchers to families with children in private schools. The funding of public education was to remain unchanged. Also different to APEL's proposals was that Toulemonde put a value to the 'bon' of around 50-60F a month, or 600F a year. This would be handed over by the father to whoever was in charge of the 'école libre', the 'curé' or 'pasteur' in the countryside, or to the appropriate religious body in the towns. In conclusion, Toulemonde claimed his ideas coincided with those of the hierarchy.

1. AN 2 AG 496 CC78 A, Letter of Toulemonde to Pétain, 15 May 1941. Details of Toulemonde's visit and proposals may also be found in Carcopino Souvenirs de Sept Ans pp.317-318
To a large extent they did. As we have already seen, in July 1941 the ACA of the occupied zone enthusiastically endorsed a voucher system of 'allocations familiales' as did the Conférence Episcopale de la Zone Non-Occupée on 4 September 1941. Such a scheme, they agreed, was one of the surest areas of safeguarding the rights of the family. Yet in neither case did the hierarchy put forward detailed suggestions as to the best means of implementing 'allocations familiales', as had APEL and Toulemonde. These remained to be decided, they declared. Nor in any case did all Catholics support a voucher system. At about the same time as Toulemonde's visit, Carcopino recollects that he received another Church emissary, a Parisian lawyer named Blateau.' Like Toulemonde, Blateau began by describing the past difficulties of Catholic schools, and expressed a hope that the State would provide subsidies as quickly as possible. But he did not believe all Catholic schools should be treated on an equal footing. Those which educated less than 20 per cent of the local school population, he suggested, should receive no help, whereas those which instructed 70 per cent or more should automatically receive aid. Between these two percentages Blateau proposed a system of graded subsidies. In exchange for its help, the State would acquire the right to oversee the recruitment and quality of teaching staff to ensure that its money was being put to good use.

The government was slow to respond to these proposals. In

1. Carcopino Souvenirs de Sept Ans p.317
part, this is not surprising given the diverse nature of the schemes. While all advocated some form of RPS, and while a voucher system of 'allocations familiales' appeared most popular, they did not agree on any one way of administering subsidies. This troubled Carcopino who, while impressed by the ingenious diversity of the schemes considered the question of subsidies was so complex that it should not be the preserve of any one minister, but a matter for government as a whole to discuss. Yet just when he thought he had managed to widen the scope of responsibility, on 18 July 1941 he suddenly received a letter from Pétain requesting him to prepare a plan on subsidies favouring either RPS or other means for the Council of Ministers due to meet on 26 of that month.

Why Pétain should have picked that moment and given Carcopino so little time to prepare a plan is unclear. It went totally against the caution of government policy. Carcopino implies that the answer lies in the genuine desire of Pétain to help Catholic schools. Of this there can be little doubt. Pétain had been deeply impressed by Toulemonde's scheme and was generally in favour of 'allocations familiales'. Yet it may also be that the Marshal considered that the

1. Carcopino Souvenirs de Sept Ans p.317
2. ibid p.318
3. ibid
4. Auphan Histoire Elementaire p.119
matter had gone on too long and that the government could no longer afford to drag its heels. With the ACA meeting in Paris on 24 July it was well-known the hierarchy would raise the issue, as indeed they did. Would not then the government be able to give them a concrete answer? An immediate response might also compensate for the disappointment the Church had recently suffered with the rescinding of Chevalier's legislation on the catechism.

Whatever Pétain's motives, Carcopino was extremely troubled by the letter. Six days was not enough, he replied, to come up with coherent legislation in so complex a matter. Moreover, Pétain's request had been written in such a way that it seemed the Marshal not only wished to support existing Catholic schools but to set up new ones as well. Such an implication ran counter to Carcopino's desire to maintain the religious peace, the terms on which he had accepted his post in March 1941, and he duly offered his resignation. This was refused by Pétain who appears afterwards to have been won over by his Minister's reasoning. Instead, Carcopino was now granted as much time as he required and would report, when adequately prepared, to a government committee of Ministers especially constituted to look into the question of subsidies.

This committee met six weeks later at the start of September 1941.

1. Letter of Pétain to Carcopino, 18 July 1941. This began, 'Vous savez le désir que j'ai de voir se développer en France, aux côtés d'une école publique assainie et fortifiée, un enseignement libre et protégée'. Quoted in Carcopino Souvenirs de Sept Ans p.318
Present alongside Carcopino were Darlan Vice-President of the Council, Bouthillier, Minister of Finance, Pucheu, Minister of the Interior and Moysett, Minister of State representing Pétain. Carcopino, as chairman, began the meeting by explaining that he was in favour of the 'neutralité' of the State school, but considered that this was not incompatible with the freedom of education. The two, he claimed, complemented each other and were essential ingredients in the preservation of national unity. Consequently, he was in favour of the right of the father of a poor family to place his children in a school of his own choosing and considered that the circumstances of the war had placed this right in jeopardy. But, as a moderate, Carcopino was not willing to go any further than this and stated that only existing Catholic schools were in need of assistance. To try and solve the debate over the rights of the father and the choice of school now would be inappropriate particularly with the country part-occupied. He had no wish to upset the State 'instituteurs', nor awaken any anticlericalism that might harm the Church and divide people's loyalties.

Such reasoning led Carcopino to propose to the Committee that aid be given only to those Catholic schools in difficulty and in as unobtrusive a fashion as possible. Subventions should not be seen as a 'profession de foi', he argued, but 'une assistance à l'infortune, qu'elles

1. Carcopino Souvenirs de Sept Ans p.320 et seq
constitueront une mesure, non de principe, mais d'opportunité." As such, aid could not be seen coming from the Education Ministry, but from the more 'neutral' Ministry of the Interior. Nor could aid derive from the framework of the State itself, or from the communes where it could be a potentially divisive issue like the Caisse des Écoles. Instead, it ought to come from the departments which would act on the reports of the prefects, who in turn would liaise with departmental commissions specially set up to look into the material hardships of the schools in the area. In return for this assistance the State would receive guarantees of the standards within the schools it was supporting. But, concluded Carcopino, before some such scheme could be implemented the Church itself must be consulted and its approval obtained.

This latter provision of Church-State consultation was probably a wise one, considering that, in his moderation, Carcopino had rejected the idea of 'allocations familiales'. As may be seen from Carcopino's reasoning, he was convinced that he was dealing with a temporary problem and not trying to find the definitive solution. Yet because of his moderation his suggestions won support from the committee of ministers. Darlan, as a noted anticlerical, gave his approval as did Pucheu. Pucheu later recalled from his prison cell in North Africa in 1943, that in the

1. Carcopino Souvenirs de Sept Ans p.322
circumstances a temporary solution was undoubtedly the best one. He also agreed that the money should come from the Interior and consented to make provisions for subsidies in his future budgets. Likewise, Bouthillier was impressed by Carcopino's arguments. Given the material difficulties of private education in 1941, he believed that Vichy was faced with two alternatives in regard to Catholic schools: firstly of allowing them to close down and of establishing a State monopoly as Déat wanted; or, secondly, of coming to their assistance. He favoured the latter option, and agreed with Carcopino that subventions best came from the departments. Not only would this be the best guarantee of stability, but it was the most practical arrangement. As the frontiers of the departments coincided with those of the dioceses it would be easier to proportion the size of subsidies according to the relative density and difficulties of Catholic schools, and would make contact between bishop and prefect straightforward. But there was also an added advantage as Carcopino himself pointed out. Because the law already stipulated that the opening of any school had to be declared to the Préfecture in advance, the prefects would be able to ensure that subsidies were not being deflected from their original purpose of helping only those establishments in genuine need and being used to set up new schools instead.

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1. Pucheu *Ma Vie* p.284

The final problem remaining for the committee was with whom in the Church should they negotiate. Ideally it should have been Liénart, the Doyen of the French Cardinals. But as Liénart resided in the forbidden zone this would have required a special 'ausweis' to go and see him, and might have aroused the curiosity and interference of the Germans. Consequently, the committee opted instead for Suhard in Paris, next in superiority, and chose Carcopino as their own representative.

Carcopino opened negotiations with Suhard at a meeting in Paris on 17 September 1941. Here the Education Minister embellished upon the conditions agreed earlier by the Council of Ministers. Firstly, he put it to the Cardinal that aid would come from the Ministry of the Interior and be administered through the departments. Secondly, only schools in need were to be subsidized, and only when they educated a sizeable proportion of the local population. Thirdly, aid would not be used to set up new schools in case this might be interpreted as an indirect attack on State schools. Fourthly, Carcopino laid down a number of conditions for schools assisted. These would not be allowed to use textbooks banned in State schools and would have to present their pupils to the Certificat d'Etudes Primaires, (CEP), the leaving certificate recently made compulsory for State schoolchildren. And, finally,

1. AN 2 AG 496 CC78 A, Report by Dodier, 18 September 1941, on the meeting of 17 September between Carcopino and Suhard. Also see Dodier A la Recherche de la Paix Scolaire p.39 et seq.
subsidized schools were to be subject to State inspection, and their teachers were to be in possession of the same professional qualifications as their State colleagues.

Both to Carcopino's surprise and to his relief, Suhard accepted these points as a foundation on which to build negotiations. No one on the government's side had expected things to go so smoothly. Moysett had even gone as far to predict Carcopino would return empty-handed.' Yet Suhard appeared in every way amenable. Carcopino was especially relieved to hear the Cardinal state that subsidies would in no way be seen as either a conquest or revenge on the 'école publique'. Consequently, he wrote to Suhard on 29 September 1941, 'C'est avec une réconnaissante émotion que je vous ai entendu répudier toute pensée de représailles ou d'hostilité envers l'enseignement de l'Etat.' In the same letter, Carcopino once more laid down the conditions for aid discussed at the meeting of 17 September, and mentioned the probable figure of 400-500 million francs for subsidies.

Quite why Suhard had been so accommodating at the meeting of 17 September 1941 is difficult to say. Maybe it was a measure of the desperateness of the situation, or of Suhard's ready willingness to please. Yet on receipt of Carcopino's letter of 29 September, Suhard's

1 Carcopino Souvenirs de Sept Ans p.324
2 Dodier A la Recherche de la Paix Scolaire p.42
3 AN 2 AG 496 CC78 A, Letter of Carcopino to Suhard, 29 September 1941
mood changed markedly. This time his reasons are not hard to understand. In a reply to Carcopino of 3 October Suhard explained that he was disconcerted that the points they had discussed provisionally had been presented in Carcopino's letter as if they were already settled. These were matters, Suhard explained, he could not decide alone. He would have to put them to the hierarchy. Furthermore, he expressed disappointment that Carcopino had made no allusion to the rights of the father, surely the most important aspect of the issue. Thus the Cardinal asked Carcopino to reconsider these points and submit a further draft of his proposals so that these could be presented to the ACA meeting at Paris that month.

Carcopino received Suhard's letter with some disappointment. He had hoped for greater progress but accepted that he had committed an error in presenting the government's proposals as if they were already finalised in his letter of 29 September. To accommodate Suhard he reconvened the original Council of Ministers to review the situation. They, however, were unprepared to go further than their original suggestions which were duly forwarded to Suhard on 13 October.

In turn, Suhard presented the government's proposals to the ACA of the occupied zone, meeting on 15 October 1941. Nor were Church leaders in a conciliatory mood. Although they did not reject the

1. AN 2 AG 496 CC78 A, Letter of Suhard to Carcopino, 3 October 1941
2. Carcopino *Souvenirs de Sept Ans* pp. 328-329
plans outright, they found them wanting in several respects. To begin
with, they were dissatisfied that subventions were a temporary expedient
and wished instead that the law should recognise as a principle the
right of the father to send his children to a school of his own choice.
To exercise this right the ACA once more stated its support for a
voucher system of 'allocations familiales'. Nor was the hierarchy happy
that the source of the funding should be the Ministry of the Interior.
This, it was felt, gave the subsidies too much of a political flavour
at a time when the Church was anxious to distance itself from the Vichy
government. It is significant that the ACA, in its declaration of 17
October, expressed to Pétain, and not the government, 'ses vifs
remerciements pour les mesures transitoires qu'il avait hier voulu
envisager en attendant que fût élaboré un statut qui rendre
effectivement à toutes les familles le libre choix de l'école.' And,
finally, the ACA expressed the view that any new law on subsidies should
preserve intact the legislation on the Caisse des Ecoles and communal
subventions. Although Chevalier's measures do not appear to have figured
highly in the negotiations until then, Carcopino's opposition to local
aid was well known to the Conference.

Once again these reservations were received with disappointment at
Vichy. Carcopino had hoped for greater flexibility on the part of the
ACA. Yet indications of the Church's position had been there for all

1. Duquesne Les Catholiques Français p.97
to see. Earlier on 4 September 1941 the Conférence Episcopale de la Zone Non-Occupée had come out in favour of 'allocations familiales'. Since then Gerlier, ignorant of the state of play of the negotiations in Paris, had repeated this demand in a letter to Pétain of 5 September, and to Carcopino on 4 October. But from Vichy’s point of view, the Church requests had come too late. Carcopino recalls that to have re-assembled the Council of Ministers on subsidies would have been a waste of time. Concerned above all else with the preservation of stability, all they would have done is to have ratified yet again the arrangements originally agreed upon at the start of September.

Thus the law of 2 November 1941 granting subsidies did not implement any of the concessions the hierarchy had been hoping for. In the preamble, aid was described specifically as a ‘mesure exceptionnel’ and adapted to the circumstances. No mention was made of the rights of the family. Nor was there to be a voucher system, but instead, as the government had originally envisaged, subventions would be distributed through the departments, the exact sums for each school being fixed by the prefects. Moreover, only private primary schools already in existence and which conformed to the law of 30 October 1886 were

1. AN 2 AG 493 CC74 B, Letter of Gerlier to Pétain, 5 September 1941
2. AN 2 AG 496 CC78 A, Letter of Gerlier to Carcopino, 4 October 1941
3. Carcopino Souvenirs de Sept Ans p.329
4. Law no.4663, 2 November 1941, in JO 9 novembre 1941, no.305, pp.4850-4851
eligible for subsidies. Even then, before they could qualify for government support, they would have to prove that they had a sufficient number of pupils on their books and that economic circumstances threatened their closure. Finally, the law of 6 January 1941 on communal subventions was abolished.

A second law of the same date stipulated State controls over the schools assisted. In future, these could be inspected by the following officials: Rectors; General Inspectors; Academy Inspectors; Primary Inspectors; the Mayor; and Medical Inspectors. Yet, apart from the medical side, inspection was restricted to the nature and quality of the teaching and could only take place in the presence of the school's head or his representative. Schools still had the freedom to fix their own timetables, choose their own curriculum, and adopt their preferred teaching methods. They could not, however, use text books banned in State primary schools. Furthermore, their pupils would have to sit the CEP, and from 1 October 1947 all new teachers in Catholic primary schools would have to have passed the 'baccalauréat'.

Finally, a third law of 2 November abrogated Chevalier's legislation on the Caisse des Ecoles. In its place permission was granted for the

1. Law no.4661, 2 November 1941, in JO 9 novembre 1941, no.305, p.4851
2. Law no.4661, 2 November 1941, in JO 9 novembre 1941, no.305, p.4851
establishment of a separate Caisse des Ecoles Privées restricted to pupils from private schools.

As has been remarked, these final provisions do not appear to have featured prominently in the negotiations of September and October. Yet Carcopino had never been shaken in the belief he first expressed at the Council of Ministers of 13 March 1941, that Chevalier's legislation was a threat to the religious peace. He would reiterate this opposition in a letter to Pétain of 29 October 1941: 'In many places, he wrote, pupils of State schools had been deprived of funds from the Caisse des Ecoles because potential benefactors were worried that their contributions would go to the 'école libre'. Yet, he added, with the creation of a separate Caisse des Ecoles Privées, this problem could be overcome.

The Church remained unconvinced. The rescinding of Chevalier's legislation was almost universally condemned. Suhard was particularly disappointed. He saw no reason why a Caisse Unique should not continue to function alongside the new regime of subsidies. APEL was more forthright in its criticisms. At its conference for the non-occupied zone, meeting at Lyon on 23 November 1941, it declared that the new law on the Caisse had destroyed the formula of union and solidarity.

1. AN 2 AG 496 CC78 A Letter of Carcopino to Pétain, 29 October 1941
2. E. Mailard, 'La réforme de l'Enseignement', in RHDGM, no.56, octobre 1964, p.49
Chevalier had intended.' Likewise *La Croix* of 8 January 1942 spoke of Chevalier's original legislation as measures of equality, and regretted that a distinction had once more been established between 'enseignement libre' and 'enseignement public'. Yet these reactions were largely predictable. What of the wider Catholic response to the laws of 2 November 1941?

The hierarchy's reaction was one of reserved satisfaction. It was reserved because their own proposals for 'allocations familiales' had not been implemented. This led Mgr. Beaussart to describe subsidies as a 'modus vivendi' and not as a 'statut définitif'. Privately other bishops were worried that the Church was compromising itself too much with the regime by accepting aid. Maybe in the back of their minds were the admonitions of *Cahiers du Témoignage Chrétien* which in April/May 1942 warned the Church about becoming too involved with the material plight of its schools at the expense of spiritual values. But it was largely for the material benefits that the hierarchy welcomed Carcopino's legislation. Even before the laws had been passed, on 12 October Liénart wrote to the priests of his diocese claiming that at

1. AN F17 13365, Declaration of APEL of non-occupied zone, November 1941
2. *La Croix* 8 janvier 1942
3. *La Croix* 10 novembre 1941
4. *Cahiers du Témoignage Chrétien* avril-mai 1942
long last Catholic teachers would receive a living wage.' Later in 1943 Gerlier pronounced:

...la vie de nos écoles libres, suppose en outre des secours pécuniaires dont l'absence, au cours des années passées, a trop souvent risqué d'entraîner leur disparition. Nos angoisses ont été apaisées à cet égard, dans un appréciable mesure, par les dispositions récentes, inspirées d'une haute équité, qui nous ont permis spécialement d'améliorer la situation matérielle, jusque-là si pénible, des maîtres et maîtresses dévouées de nos écoles.  

But apart from the obvious practical advantages, some members of the hierarchy welcomed the legislation, rather as Carcopino had hoped, as measures towards unity in the nation. Mgr. Rastouil, bishop of Limoges, declared in October 1942, 'Le gouvernement de la France nouvelle n'a pas voulu que les enfants de nos écoles libres fassent traités, c'est-à-dire en étrangers, en inconnus, en délaissés, puisqu'ils sont français comme les autres...'

The more militant of the lower clergy did not share such sentiments. One 'curé-archiprêtre' from Cholet (Maine-et-Loire), where Church schools educated more than 70 per cent of all primary schoolchildren, wrote a bitter letter of protest to Pétain in

1. Mgr Guerry L'Eglise Catholique p.320
2. Letter of Gerlier to Pierre Lucien-Brun, no date (early 1943?) in SR de Lyon 12 mars 1943, p.102
3. SR de Limoges 19 octobre 1942, p.357
January 1942. Claiming to represent the views of the majority of 'curés' from the Choletais region, he argued that Catholics had been duped by the laws of 2 November. By stipulating that private schools had to prove their economic difficulties, he complained, 'Ainsi les enfants des écoles privés seront encore des pauvres à qui on pourra donner une aumône à la porte.' But his protests fell on deaf ears. Lavagne, replying for the Marshal on 8 April 1942, pointed out that the law was only meant as a temporary expedient. 'La grande majorité de la France', he wrote, 'n'est pas prête à accepter, dès à présent certaines réformes, mêmes celles que commandent la logique, la justice, le respect des principes les plus sacrés, l'intérêt bien compris du pays.' It was necessary to wait, he concluded, for the National Revolution to triumph before more far-reaching reforms could be undertaken.

However, militant Catholics disagreed. APEL was especially disheartened that the government had failed to implement its proposals of 17 April 1941 for 'allocations familiales'. Ecole et Liberté could only bring itself to give sparing praise to the November legislation, welcoming it solely as a means to offset an immediate financial crisis. But at a special conference held at Lyon on 23 November 1941, the

1. AN 2 AG 493 CC75 A, Letter from abbé P... D..., 'curé archiprêtre', Cholet, to Pétain, January 1942
2. AN 2 AG 493 CC75 A, Letter from Lavagne to abbé P... D..., 8 April 1942
3. Ecole et Liberté novembre/décembre 1941
mood of APEL was little other than deeply critical.' Firstly, delegates complained that the law was limited to schools in need. In this respect, they claimed, the law was more restrictive than that on communal subventions of 6 January 1941. Secondly, they criticised the exceptional nature of subsidies. Echoing the claims of Mgr Beaussart, they announced that the law could not be seen as the definitive statute of 'enseignement primaire libre', but as 'une mesure provisoire'. And, thirdly, they expressed disappointment that no mention was made of the rights of the family. Thus delegates voted unanimously for a resolution calling on the government to implement APEL's original recommendations of April 1941.

Individual parents were also troubled by the law, although for different reasons to APEL. Their concern lay more with the nature and extent of the new State controls over subsidized schools. Indeed, their fears are understandable in view of the attacks of certain collaborationist newspapers. While the majority of the collaborationist press roundly condemned the law of 2 November, L'Oeuvre of 13 November 1941 actually welcomed it because it saw in the State controls on teaching, textbooks and hygiene the means of destroying the freedom of confessional schools. To support this view,

1. AN F17 13365, Declaration of APEL of non-occupied zone, November 1941

2. AN 72 AJ 1863, Press cutting from L'Oeuvre 13 novembre 1941
L'Oeuvre quoted an anonymous prefect who surmised that through State inspection the initiative allowed to Catholic schools would be 'très faible'. Pleased by this prediction, L'Oeuvre concluded, 'Il subsistera, en France, un enseignement privé. Il n'y aura plus d'enseignement libre.'

Naturally Catholics were troubled, but the Church was reassuring in its response. For example, in reply to a number of letters from worried parents, the Bulletin des Ecoles Libres for the diocese of Viviers published an article on 6 February 1942 entitled 'Allons-nous aliéner notre liberté?' To this question the answer was an emphatic 'no'. Beginning with the problem of inspection over the quality of teaching and whether this would constitute an unwarrantable interference in the running of a school, the article replied, 'Cela ne nous effraie pas; nous apportons déjà à notre classe tout coeur et tout notre savoir faire; ce sera un stimulant pour nous à mieux la préparer encore.' As to the new examination (the CEP) which Catholics now had to sit, the Bulletin went on to explain how fears had been expressed that this might restrict religious instruction. But, it continued, 'Nous ne manquerons pas d'inscrire en bonne place la leçon de catéchisme ou d'instruction religieuse, que nous désignerons en toutes lettres sous son nom véritable, sans la camoufler sous le nom de leçon de morale.' Because the State still permitted freedom in the choice of curriculum, teaching

1. Bulletin des Ecoles Libres du Diocèse de Viviers février 1942, in SR de Viviers 6 février 1942, no.6
methods and timetabling there was no way in which religious education would be tampered with or undermined. 'L'école libre, subventionné ou non', thundered the article, 'reste plus que jamais l'école confessionnelle, l'école chrétienne, et elle inscrit hautement et fièrement à son frontispice le mot: Dieu.' Certainly, it is impossible to imagine that Church leaders would have countenanced any legislation, however desperate they were for subsidies, that interfered with the religious mission of Catholic education.

It appears, therefore, that Catholic fears for the independence of their schools were to a large extent allayed, and that, overall, moderate Catholic opinion welcomed the subsidies. The majority would agree with the verdict of La Semaine Religieuse de Lyon when it wrote on 21 November 1941, 'Ceux qui ont porté jusqu'ici les lourds soucis financiers de l'entretien de ces écoles et avec eux tous les catholiques, accueilleront avec une reconnaissance qui n'exclut pas, d'ailleurs, certains regrets, cette première satisfaction donnée aux requêtes de la justice et du bon justice...'' But as the article suggested, the law of 2 November 1941 did not mark the end of the problem. The practical benefit of subsidies remained to be seen whereas even moderate Catholics hoped for more. Having battled this far, the Church was not going to give up now.

1. SR de Lyon, 21 novembre 1941, no.52, p.577
Chapter Nine

SUBSIDIES AND AFTER

Despite the high expectations of the Church, subsidies did not get off to a good start. Nor, in their brief lifetime, did they ever function smoothly. Rather they were continually marred by administrative muddles and delays. By the end of July 1942, out of 87 departments which had requested aid, 13 had received nothing and the majority of the others had not been paid the full amount promised. This led to vigorous Church protests. On 4 June Mgr. Chappoulie complained that the delays had not just aggravated the material plight of many schools, but had created a feeling of dissatisfaction among Catholics towards the government. Cardinal Gerlier and Mgr Bornet at Lyon echoed these criticisms. At the start of June 1942, they too remarked on Catholic ill-feeling towards Vichy and warned that unless subsidies were forwarded quickly many Catholic teachers in the Rhône would go hungry and start looking for new jobs. But their protests did little to speed things up. In April the following year the Marshal was once more flooded with Church complaints about the slowness of subsidies. By 1944 there

1. AN 2 AG 496 CC78 A, 'Note' dated 30 July 1942
2. AN 2 AG 496 CC78 A, Letter of Mgr Chappoulie to Jacques Guerard, Secrétaire Général du Chef du Gouvernement, 4 June 1942
3. AN F17 13365, Report by General Inspector Dodier to Bonnard, 16 June 1942
4. AN 2 AG 496 CC78 A, Jardel, Secrétaire Général du Chef de l'Etat to Laval, 17 April 1943
had been some improvement, yet even then only 55 departments had submitted their estimates to the government by the beginning of May.¹

Initially these delays were due to the dilatoriness of Vichy in setting up the necessary machinery to administer subsidies. It was not until 7 January 1942 that the applicatory decree for the law of 2 November 1942 appeared.² This established the departmental consultative commissions which were to liaise with bishops in fixing the value of subsidies. These were to comprise the Prefects; Rectors; Trésoriers Payeurs Généraux; and General Inspectors. The decree of 7 January also specified that subventions should not exceed 75 per cent of a school's running costs, and were to ensure that the salary of Catholic teachers did not exceed 60 per cent of the average wage of their State counterparts.

It was, however, over another month before a circular of 26 February 1942 provided the commissions with detailed guidelines on how to base their assessments.³ Perhaps in an attempt to forestall any anticlericalism on the part of the commissions, the circular began with an emphatic reminder that the law of 2 November 1941 in no way interfered with 'la neutralité religieuse de l'État'. It continued by recalling three conditions which private primary schools had to fulfil.

1. AN F17 13390, Report by General Inspector Garonne to Bonnard, 6 June 1944
2. Decree of 7 January 1942 in JO 11 janvier 1942, p.189
3. AN F17 13321, Circular of 26 February 1942
before they could be granted subsidies. Firstly, only schools which conformed to the law of 30 October 1886 at the time of the publication of the law of 2 November 1941 were to benefit. This would ensure that subsidies were not deflected from their original purpose of helping schools in need, and that they were not used to set up new schools. Secondly, a school needed to justify the precariousness of its resources. To do this they were to submit to the Trésoriers Payeurs Généraux a copy of the previous year's budget and an estimate for the year to come. And, thirdly, to correspond to 'un besoin social', a school had to have 20 pupils on its books, or, in isolated rural areas, at least as many as the nearest State school. Nonetheless, the delay in issuing these guidelines did bring the Church the promise of future rewards. On top of their overall claims for subsidies, the circular of 26 February granted dioceses an extra 10 per cent to cover the expense of such things as administrative costs and the training of teachers, important now that all new Catholic teachers, from 1 October 1947 onwards, were to have passed the 'baccalauréat'.

It had been hoped that these guidelines would solve in advance any of the difficulties the commissions might meet. They did nothing of the sort. A report of 17 October 1942, on the experiences of the first year of subsidies, commented that the circular of 26 February 1942 had lacked precision.¹ This went on to describe a number of the unforeseen problems

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1. AN F17 13365, 'Subventions aux écoles privées, 17 octobre 1941'
encountered by the commissions. The most frequent of these was that there was no sure way of checking the authenticity of Catholic claims. Again it was the circular of 26 February which was at fault for not having paid sufficient attention to the problems of inspection. Thus the Trésoriers Payeurs Généraux of the Nord and Morbihan complained that in their departments, while the Church had requested the full 75 per cent to which it was entitled, they had been unable to verify these demands. Certainly the commissions were suspicious about Catholic claims. Several reported that schools were failing to insert receipts from boarders into their budgets, whereas some dioceses were concealing building costs of new schools under normal expenditure.

There can be little doubt that, in some instances, the Church was deliberately falsifying its claims, thus making the commissions' lot harder and slowing down the speed by which subsidies could be distributed. Frequent government circulars warned the commissions to be on their guard,' although the true extent of the problem is unknown. Certainly in Viviers the authenticity of Catholic demands was under doubt. In January 1943 the Bulletin des Écoles Libres for the diocese published a detailed report urging schools to be more meticulous to detail in their requests. In order to defend State officials from the

1. AN F17 13323 For example, a circular of 26 May 1943 from Jolly, Director of Primary Education reminded Academy Inspectors to be aware of these problems

2. Bulletin des Écoles Libres du Diocèse de Viviers janvier 1943, no.1, in SR de Viviers 1 janvier 1943, no.1, pp.419-422
charges of unfairness and pettiness in their assessments the report began by emphasizing the professional integrity and honesty of the departmental commission. Its members have studied their demands, it wrote, 'avec une parfaite objectivité et dans un grand esprit de compréhension'. But the report went on to reveal that many of the total sums requested did not correspond with what had actually been spent, and, instead, were more representative of provisional expenditure. Out of 340 claims around 40 presented flagrant errors in such things as teachers' salaries. Over 80 had surpassed the 75 per cent maximum that could be attributed, while there were also fears that schools were concealing new building costs under current expenditure. Yet what this report also displays is that rather than deliberately falsifying their claims, several schools simply did not understand what information the commission required of them. After all it was not until after the first year of subsidies that Vichy actually issued a standardized application form for subsidies.' Meanwhile, schools had to make do and draw up their own applications, usually under the supervision of the Directeur de l'Enseignement Privé.

In turn, the amateurish and exaggerated nature of Catholic claims often exasperated government officials and gave rise to anticlericalism. While it appears that the majority of the commissions examined Catholic demands in an 'esprit libéral et compréhensif' (Circular of 26 February

1. An example of the form introduced for 1943 may be found in AN F17 13365
1942), others were far less sympathetic and had no real desire to see the scheme work. At the beginning of 1942, the Préfet de la Région de Rennes, representing the Côtes du Nord, Finistère, Ille-et-Villaine and the Morbihan, wrote to Pucheu questioning whether subsidies could be administered with 'la plus grande tolérance' Carcopino had hoped for.' Not only did the Préfet point out the inadequacies of government preparations, he complained of the intransigence of the Church's position in the West. Already Mgr. Roques, archbishop of Rennes, had made known to him that schools in Brittany were going to claim the full 75 per cent to which he believed they were entitled whether they were deemed officially eligible or not. Attitudes like this did little to endear Church and State authorities to one another.

In the light of these problems it is not surprising that in the first year of subsidies at least, there were delays. Yet it also meant that it was some while before Vichy could ascertain the total amount of money the Church had demanded. By 10 June 1942 Vichy only knew the sums requested by six departments: the Cantal; Aisne; Ardèche; Nord; Pas-de-Calais; and Drôme, When, later that summer, Vichy had received claims from 83 departments, the amount came to 400,436,594F, on top of which

1. AN F17 13390, Report of the Préfet de la Région de la Rennes to Pucheu, 23 January 1942
2. AN F17 13365, Report of General Inspector Garonne to Bonnard, 10 June 1942
was added 28,003,512F, representing the 10 per cent for administrative costs. This brought the overall total requested in 1941-42 to 428,440,106F. However, Carcopino recalls that the actual figure paid out that year was only 386,248,968F, again an indication that the Church had been exaggerating its demands.

As might have been anticipated those departments which made the highest claims in 1941-1942 were in the North where material devastation had been heaviest, and in the West where Catholic education was most densely concentrated. Thus the five departments with the highest demands were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Claim for 1941-1942 (Excluding 10% administrative cost)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seine</td>
<td>30,000,000F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loire Inférieure</td>
<td>20,515,322F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ille-et-Vilaine</td>
<td>20,000,000F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pas-de-Calais</td>
<td>19,774,000F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morbihan</td>
<td>19,302,039F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. AN F17 13365, 'Note sur les subventions aux écoles privées', no date (late summer, 1942?). It should be noted that of this figure non-Catholic private schools claimed 419,112F.

2. Carcopino Souvenirs de Sept Ans p.332

3. AN F17 13365, 'Note sur les subventions aux écoles privées', no date (late summer 1942?). Cf. Halls The Youth of Vichy France p.93
Accordingly, the departments with the lowest claims were largely in the mountainous South where Catholic schools were few. In none of these departments did the Church educate more than 10 per cent of the total primary school population in 1941-1942. These were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Claim for 1941-1942</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basses Alpes</td>
<td>79,551F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hautes Alpes</td>
<td>284,500F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belfort</td>
<td>436,508F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creuse</td>
<td>441,604F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Altogether twelve departments requested less than one million francs, whereas the same number demanded more than ten million francs.

What did prove unusual about the first year of subventions was the amount of subsidy per pupil. As the following table illustrates, this varied widely from department to department:

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1. AN F17 13365 'Note sur les subventions aux écoles privées', no date (late summer 1942?) Cf. Halls The Youth of Vichy France p.93
2. ibid
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Subsidy per head</th>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Subsidy per head</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Savoie</td>
<td>560F</td>
<td>Vienne</td>
<td>726F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lot</td>
<td>649F</td>
<td>Nièvre</td>
<td>674F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrèze</td>
<td>428F</td>
<td>Maine-et-Loire</td>
<td>434F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gard</td>
<td>730,82F</td>
<td>Alpes-Maritimes</td>
<td>307F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ille-et-Vilaine</td>
<td>400F</td>
<td>Aisne</td>
<td>442,91F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finistère</td>
<td>600F</td>
<td>Orne</td>
<td>549,50F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vosges</td>
<td>503F</td>
<td>Haute-Savoie</td>
<td>439,16F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tarn</td>
<td>845F</td>
<td>Manche</td>
<td>718F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calvados</td>
<td>617F</td>
<td>Indre-et-Loire</td>
<td>765F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oise</td>
<td>765F</td>
<td>Cher</td>
<td>600F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aveyron</td>
<td>456,35F</td>
<td>Sarthe</td>
<td>430F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These anomalies were due to the differing means by which the commissions, in the absence of detailed guidelines, had reached their conclusions. While in some departments the Church received the full 75 per cent, elsewhere the commissions were far less generous. In the Indre-et-Loire, for instance, the commission ensured that subsidies included the augmentation of teachers' salaries, the increase in the cost of living, and covered the diocese's deficits. Yet in the Orne the commission was less benevolent and the full 75 per cent was only granted.

1. AN F17 13365, 'Note sur les subventions aux écoles privées', no date (late summer 1942?)
in cases of absolute necessity. It also appears that some commissions included building repairs in their calculations whereas others, for instance the Rhône, excluded these lest they were being used to set up new schools.

A further anomaly existed in the wage claims for Catholic teachers. It will be recalled that the decree of 7 January 1942 had specified that the average salary of the 'instituteur' should not exceed 60 per cent of the 'instituteur public'. As the average wage of a State teacher was then 16,500F, it was anticipated that Catholic teachers would not exceed 9,900F. Yet in several departments Catholic teachers were already being paid more than this. For example, in the Loire Inférieure their average wage was 13,800F, 15,500F in the Meuse, 16,340F in the Loir et and 12,375F in the Sarthe. But in many cases, these departments were still claiming the full 75 per cent. Thus in the Sarthe the wage of a Catholic teacher had increased to 88.92 per cent of that of a State teacher. Again this casts serious doubts over the authenticity of Catholic claims.

As a result of these divergences a number of recommendations were made in the summer of 1942 to improve the future running of subsidies. Firstly, it was suggested that private schools should keep a detailed register of receipts and expenditure, including the cost of such things

1. AN F17 13365, 'Note sur les subventions aux écoles privées', no date (late summer 1942?)
2. ibid
as teachers' salaries, staff pensions, furniture, heating and lighting. This would be available, on request, to the Primary Inspectors and Trésorier Payeurs Généraux. Secondly, to ensure that the commissions received the information they required, a standardized application form for subsidies was seen as an absolute necessity. Thirdly, it was recommended that the number of Catholic teachers was limited so that the pupil-teacher ratio was 1:35-40. This would ensure conformity with State schools and remove the cost of extra teachers. And, finally, it was requested that the departmental commissions should submit to the government a detailed report verifying the claims for each school.

But for some officials these recommendations did not go far enough. One report at the beginning of October 1942 advocated a far more radical restructuring of the law of 2 November 1941 — something along the lines of BPS. Under these proposals Catholic schools would no longer have to prove the precariousness of their resources. Instead, the State would automatically contribute a percentage towards parts of a school's budget — salaries, heating, lighting, furniture and equipment. The amount would still be fixed by a departmental commission, and, to be eligible, a school needed to educate a minimum of the population as before. Nevertheless, it was hoped that such a scheme would reduce the work of the commission and bring the funding of private schools more into line with that of public education. But with Bonnard now in charge, a strong

1. AN F17 13365, 'Note sur les subventions aux écoles libres', 3 October 1942
opponent of State subsidies, there was little chance of these suggestions being implemented.

Nor does it appear that the more modest proposals outlined in the summer of 1942 were put into force. A report on how subsidies were operating in June 1944, based on the files of 54 departments received by May that year, recounts many of the problems familiar to 1942. As before, it appears that the Church was exaggerating its claims, with most dioceses demanding the full 75 per cent. By then, almost everywhere Catholic teachers were being paid more than the 60 per cent maximum. In most instances their average wage had risen to 75 per cent of that of the State teacher. Moreover, Catholic accounting remained vague despite the use of application forms. Many schools had not attempted to justify their expenses whereas others had not even bothered to produce their budgets expecting subsidies as an automatic right. Certainly these conclusions are borne out by a Church report on one department at the start of 1944. The Bulletin des Ecoles Libres du Diocèse de Viviers records little progress since 1942. It complained that most schools were claiming over the 75 per cent to which they were entitled, and that few had managed to provide detailed accounts of their receipts and expenditure.

1. AN F17 13390, Report of General Inspector Garonne to Bonnard, 6 June 1944
2. Bulletin des Ecoles Libres du Diocèse de Viviers janvier 1944, no.1, in SR de Viviers 7 janvier 1944, no.1, pp.6-8
In 1944, as in 1942, the major problem with subsidies appears to have been the question of State inspection. As the report of 6 June 1944 stated there was no sure way of verifying Catholic demands. In part, this was due to the Church's own obduracy. As the Trésorier Payeur Général for the Eure pointed out, Catholics were worried lest financial controls would entail the submission of 'enseignement privé' to a regime identical to that of 'enseignement public'. Consequently, many schools remained unco-operative and looked upon the departmental commissions with suspicion despite the reassurances of the hierarchy. Yet it also appears that the government never bothered to issue adequate instructions on inspection. The Primary Inspectors on whom the Trésoriers Payeurs Généraux were largely dependent on to base their assessments, frequently complained that they were powerless to check such things as pupil:teacher ratios, school receipts and teachers' salaries. In the case of academic inspection - the quality of teaching the law of 2 November 1941 had specified - this appears to have disappeared completely after Carcopino, solely because Vichy never issued a further circular for its authorisation.²

In the absence of any effective State controls it is not surprising that Catholic demands for subsidies should have risen sharply. It will be recalled that in 1941-42 the Church had requested 428,440,106F. Yet

1. AN F17 13390, Report of General Inspector Garonne to Bonnard, 6 June 1944
2. Ibid
in 1942-43, this request had risen to 499,365,963F, a percentage increase of 16.5. For 1943-44, it is probable the demand would have been even greater. Already by May 1944, 55 départements had submitted estimates of 380,739,493F, and it was anticipated the total would be around 600,000,000F. Of these 55, only 2, the Eure and Doubs, marked a small decrease in their demands on the previous year. In the case of the Eure, this was because the Inspecteur Général de l'Enseignement Privé had bothered to go through each school's claim with a fine toothcomb. Yet of the other departments in 1943-1944, 23 had requested an increase of over 25 per cent on the previous year, whereas only 8 had asked for a rise of less than 10 per cent. Mgr. Chappoulie argued that these increases were necessary to pay Catholic teachers the maximum 60 per cent. But, as we have seen, such statements need

1. AN 2 AG 496 CC78 A, 'Note pour M.le Ministre des Finances au sujet des subventions a l'enseignement primaire privé, par application de la loi du 2 Novembre 1941', by Mgr Chappoulie, 23 December 1943. Carcopino Souvenirs de Sept Ans p.333, gives the demand for 1942-43 as 471,093,321F. Neither Chappoulie or Carcopino state whether their figures include the administrative 10 per cent.

2. AN F17 13390, Report of General Inspector Garonne to Bonnard, 6 June 1944

3. AN 2 AG 496 CC78 A, 'Note pour M.le Ministre des Finances au sujet des subventions à l'enseignement primaire privé, par application de la loi du 2 Novembre 1941', by Mgr Chappoulie, 23 December 1943.

4. AN F17 13390, Report of General Inspector Garonne to Bonnard, 6 June 1944

5. ibid

6. AN 2 AG 496 CC78 A, 'Note pour M.le Maréchal de France, Chef de l'Etat', by Mgr Chappoulie, 27 February 1944
to be treated with caution. Rather the substantial increases again cast doubts about the authenticity of Catholic demands, and the efficiency of State inspection.

Subsidies on this scale could not help but have an important impact on the numbers in Catholic education. As the following table illustrates the percentage in Catholic elementary schools was to grow noticeably in the Vichy period:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Public</th>
<th>Private</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1920-21</td>
<td>80.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1923-24</td>
<td>80.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1928-29</td>
<td>80.6</td>
<td>19.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933-34</td>
<td>82.3</td>
<td>17.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1938-39</td>
<td>82.9</td>
<td>17.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1943-44</td>
<td>77.4</td>
<td>22.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1947-48</td>
<td>80.6</td>
<td>19.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950-51</td>
<td>81.1</td>
<td>18.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955-56</td>
<td>82.5</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Between 1939 and 1943 we may see that the percentage in Catholic primary

schools rose from 17.1 per cent to 22.6 per cent, an increase of 5.5 per cent. Not only did this reverse the downward trend of the inter-war period, but improved on the 1920-21 level. It was not until 1955 that the 'école publique' recovered its 1939 standing.

At a local level it has been shown that every department for which figures exist for the 1939-43 period registered an increase in the numbers in Catholic elementary education, save one, the Somme, which marked a small decrease of 0.3 per cent. But in Northern France Catholic education had not been in that strong a position in the first place. In 1939 in no department, except the Nord and the Pas-de-Calais, did the Church educate more than 20 per cent of the total number of children in primary education. In the Ardennes the figure was as low as 1.9 per cent. Nor was the increase between 1939-1943 that great. In the Aisne there was a growth of 1.8 per cent, in the Ardennes 3.4 per cent, Pas-de-Calais 0.9 per cent, and Oise, 1.6 per cent. The most impressive increases were those for the Seine, 10.5 per cent, and the Nord which boasted an increase of 7.5 per cent, to educate 26.5 per cent of all pupils by 1943.

In Southern France, gains were more impressive, especially in those departments where Catholic elementary education was already firmly established. These were the Aveyron, Ardèche, Haute-Loire, Loire and

1. Figures taken from Halls The Youth of Vichy France pp.408-410. This provides an excellent account of how subsidies operated.
Lozère, all of which instructed at least 30 per cent of all children in 1939. In the Ardèche the figure was as high as 41.7 per cent. By 1943 of these five departments (except the Lozère and the Loire) the proportion had risen to over 40 per cent. In the Ardèche the figure had reached 48.0 per cent, an overall percentage increase of 6.3 per cent between 1939 and 1943.

Yet it was in the West, the traditional heartlands of Catholic education, that growth was most spectacular. Here, of course, the Church already enjoyed a powerful hold over elementary education. In 1939 in the departments of Mayenne, Maine-et-Loire, Loire-Inférieure, Finistère, Morbihan, Vendée and Ille-et-Vilaine, Church schools accounted for more than 40 per cent, and in the majority of these parts, over 50 per cent of all children in primary schools. By 1943, in all but one, the Finistère, the share topped 60 per cent. In the Loire-Inférieure, the figure had risen to 71.1 per cent from 52.4 per cent in 1939, a terrific leap of 18.7 per cent and the largest in all of France. As has been remarked, if circumstances had not changed and subsidies been discontinued, it is possible to imagine that by the close of the century State primary education might well have disappeared completely in these departments. Albert Bayet, a prominent figure in the Ligue de L'Enseignement before the war, certainly believed that subsidies represented the abandonment of the 80,000 State pupils in Western France.

1. Halls The Youth of Vichy France p.95
to Catholic schools.' Maybe then there was something in Catholic hopes under Vichy that the Church would be able to recover its long-lost ascendancy in education. Even if the rest of France could not quite match the imposing trend of the Breton regions, in only 24 out of 87 departments did the Church by 1943 educate less than 10 per cent of primary school children in comparison to 39 departments in 1939.

How though did subsidies facilitate this growth? Perhaps the most important way was that they encouraged a massive recruiting campaign for Catholic education. After all, the more pupils the more subsidies. Particular pressure was now on the Church to ensure that each of its schools had 20 pupils on its books, the magic figure for subsidies, or, in isolated rural districts, as many as the nearest State schools.

In part, this recruiting campaign was led by the Church hierarchy itself. There was a renewed vigour in episcopal calls to parents to obey Canon law and send their children to Catholic schools. In October 1943, Mgr. Feltin, archbishop of Bordeaux, proclaimed that the fréquentation of non-Catholic schools should be prohibited to Catholic children, and tolerated only on the special permission of the bishop. Similarly, in July 1942, Mgr. Pays, bishop of Carcassonne, ordered his clergy to

1. Du Moulin de Labarthète Les Temps des Illusions p.302
2. RR de Rodez 29 octobre 1943, no.43, p.357
remind their parishioners from the pulpit, at each successive 'rentrée', of their obligations to send their offspring to a Catholic school.²

Such episcopal demands were read out all over France in 1942 and 1943, but were sometimes interpreted in a more aggressive manner than maybe the hierarchy had intended. To many priests they were an open call to cajole and bully parents into entrusting their children to a Catholic school. Parents who did not might find themselves being refused the sacraments or denounced in a sermon. Officially, at least, the hierarchy distanced itself from such a campaign, but had a clear eye on the practical effects it was having on the 'effectifs' of Catholic schools. For instance, when in April 1943 the Academy Inspector of the Loire, complained to Mgr. Bornet about the behavior of his clergy, Bornet agreed that certain of them had been over-zealous in their methods.² But he gave no assurances that he would, or indeed could, discourage their activities. Rather he admitted, 'quelques-uns de mes curés sont difficiles à modérer, et que l'action de l'Evêque sur leur attitude est faible, le prêtre jouissant, dans la conduite de sa paroisse, d'une très large autonomie, qui le rend parfois indocile aux conseils de l'Evêché.'

It remains unclear how far Bornet's admission was a true reflection on his authority over his priests, or simply an unwillingness to do

1. SR de Carcassonne 18 juillet 1942, no. 29, p191
2. AN F17 13356, Academy Inspector of the Loire to Bonnard, 16 April 1943
anything to curtail their behaviour.

Significantly, it was in those departments with the largest increase in Catholic education that Church enrolment campaigns appear to have been fiercest. This was because it was here, where the Church already enjoyed a strong grip on education, that it was best able and most prepared to use its influence to strengthen its position further and try and overtake the State school. Consequently, most accounts of priests bullying parents into sending their children to Catholic schools stem from the West and parts of Southern France. One report of 15 October 1942 on the situation in Brittany after subsidies, remarked that 'enseignement libre' had come out in open conflict against 'enseignement public'. In the Finistère and Morbihan, in particular, it was claimed priests were openly refusing the sacrament to parents who did not send their children to Catholic schools. So strong was this pressure that in the last year between five to six thousand children had abandoned the State school for the confessional one in these two departments, with priests adding insult to injury by then asking for permission to use the old State school premises for their new pupils. As a result, the amount accorded in subventions in the Morbihan and Finistère had risen sharply. In the Catholic strongholds of the South, the Ardèche, Aveyron, Haute-Loire, Loire and Lozère, such campaigns were perhaps less

1. AN F17 13365, Report of 15 October 1942. Halls The Youth of Vichy France p.89 also comments on this report.
overt, but no less real. In April 1943 the Academy Inspector of the Loire reported instances of priests visiting parents at their homes to persuade them to send their children to the 'école privée'. If they did not, then they stood a good chance of becoming the object of a public denunciation from the pulpit.

On a more general level, subsidies facilitated the growth of private elementary education in that they provided many schools with a degree of prosperity they had hitherto not known. As one report of June 1944 put it, 'enseignement privé' had become privileged, especially in the eyes of 'enseignement public'. As a result of this new-found well-being, many schools had been able to stop charging fees. How many did this is impossible to ascertain, but it appears to have been a good number. The report of June 1944, based on the files of 54 departments, commented that most had done away with fees altogether. It was subsidies, no longer fees or profits from fund-raising events, that comprised the bulk

1. AN F17 13356, Academy Inspector of the Loire to Bonnard, 16 April 1943
2. AN F17 13390, Report of General Inspector Garonne to Bonnard, 6 June 1944
3. ibid
of a school's budget. Certainly in the Loire fees had largely disappeared by April 1943. Yet even if they had not gone, Catholic schools were now in a strong position financially to attract pupils as they could provide greater assistance to families in need. As early as October 1942 La Semaine Religieuse de Paris could boast that there was no longer any reason why children could not attend a Catholic school. Even if not all institutions in Paris had abolished fees, it was claimed that the Church could come to the aid of parents with money difficulties. Given that the Seine received 30,000,000F in the first year of subsidies, there may have been a great deal of truth in these assertions.

But it would be a mistake to believe that the law of 2 November 1941 was the sole reason behind the newly-found wealth of Catholic primary schools. We have already commented on how many schools included sport in their curriculum in order to attract lucrative government grants towards sporting equipment. Another scheme was for the Church to loan out its schools to the Secours National. This could prove highly profitable. For instance, in the summer of 1942 the ‘école libre’ of

1. AN F17 13356, Academy Inspector of the Loire to Bonnard, 16 April 1943
2. SR de Paris 3 Octobre 1942, no.4619, p.436 and 10 Octobre 1942, no.4620, p.448
3. Please see p.180
St-Didier-sur-Rochefort, in the Loire, agreed to accept 'colonies de vacances' for the Secours National.' In doing so, it received a grant of 112,000F to repair floors and ceilings, and to build an annexe for an 'internat'. The result was that the following term the number of pupils had risen by roughly a third from 42 to 63. Likewise at Marle, also in the Loire, the Secours National had provided a grant of 400,000F to the Catholic school whereby in nearby St. Etienne the State schools had received no additional expenditure for the past two years.

Even so, the money provided by the Secours National could not match the generosity of the law of 2 November 1941. As we have seen, this had contributed to the growth of Catholic elementary schools in two ways. Firstly, it had encouraged a massive recruiting campaign, especially in those areas such as the West and parts of the Midi where the Church was already strong. And, secondly, it had provided Catholic schools with a degree of prosperity which overcame the financial crisis they had been facing at the start of the war. Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to believe that these were the only reasons behind the growth of Catholic education. Other forces were also at work. After all, private elementary education grew by 2.2 per cent between 1939 and 1941 well before subsidies could have had an effect. Furthermore,

1. AN F17 13356, Academy Inspector of the Loire to Bonnard, 16 April 1943
Catholic secondary education which, of course, never received State aid registered impressive gains under Vichy. In 1939 the proportion of pupils in State secondary schools to those in Catholic ones was 60:40. Yet by 1943 this had altered to 55:45.

What, then, were the other factors behind the growth of Catholic schools? After subsidies, probably the most convincing reason lies in the quality of education which Church schools, both primary and secondary, were considered to offer. This was the view taken by the Commission led by André Philip in late 1944 which looked into the relationship between 'enseignement public' and 'enseignement privé'. In the feeling of 'mea culpa' and renewed religiosity that swept across France in 1940, many parents considered the 'école libre' as providing a much more appropriate and traditional education than State institutions. In this regard, the Commission remarked that parents were worried that if they confided their children to State school then they would come into contact with both irresponsible children and teachers. Furthermore, the Vichy regime itself may unwittingly have undermined the status of State education in many people's eyes. With the introduction of the CEP into Catholic schools their academic standing was enhanced, whereas the insertion of extra-curricular activities into the lessons of the 'école publique' was actively damaging. The demands on

1. AN 71 AJ 66, 'Dossier André Philip', 'Rapport de la Première Sous-Commission'
State teachers to organise the collection of scrap metal, wood and other items for the Secours National was regarded by many as a constant interruption in their children's education. They believed that their children were better off in the classroom than trudging around the countryside. Nor were parents happy about many of the new practical activities, sport, singing and dancing, which Vichy added to the timetables of State schools in the hope of strengthening the moral fibre of the nation's youth. Many Academy Inspectors warned the government that these lessons were actively damaging State education. In the Loire, it was reported that as a result of the activities of the Secours National and physical education, a belief had grown that 'l'école publique n'est pas l'école du travail et du sérieux'. Instead the State school was seen as the one which 'chante, danse et saute', whereas 'l'école libre travaille et éduque'.

It appears, therefore, that by 1942-43 Catholic schools were in a position to compete on the same basis for pupils with State schools. But to maintain this challenge the Church considered it essential to continue to press for further financial support from Vichy. How the hierarchy attempted to incorporate the principles of the law of 2 November 1941 into a definitive statute for 'enseignement libre' has already been explored in Chapter Two; yet other reasons drove the Church

1. AN F17 13356, Academy Inspector of the Loire to Bonnard, 16 April 1943
to demand more subsidies. Dioceses still had to find 25 per cent of a school's running costs, a sizeable proportion. Bishops felt a perennial need to remind their parishioners to keep making private donations, almost as if they feared subsidies would make people complacent and forget their obligations. As La Semaine Religieuse de Clermont warned in October 1942, 'Certains Catholiques - et peut-être certains curés non-chargés d'écoles - s'imagent trop facilement que, grâce aux subventions, notre enseignement libre pourra désormais subsister sans l'aide de la charité des fidèles.' At Aix, Mgr. Villerabel told his diocese in August 1942 that although the Préfecture of the Bouches-du-Rhône had allocated 1,400,000F in subsidies, the material situation remained the same. "Les parents chrétiens", he remarked, 'n'en devront pas moins continuer leur collaboration effective et contribuer de leur denier personnel à leur entretien comme par le passé.' Furthermore, the Church was anxious that it still had to find all the costs for nursery, secondary, technical and higher education. And, finally, there remained the hope that the Church might be able to claw back some of the financial palliatives on communal subventions and the Caisse des Ecoles it had lost with the passing of the law of 2 November 1941.

Within nursery education, at least, the Church made up a little lost

1. SR de Clermont 31 octobre 1942, no. 44, p. 386
2. SR d'Aix 9 août 1942, no. 25, p. 282
ground. In abolishing the law of 6 January 1941 on communal subventions, the legislation of 2 November had also inadvertently abrogated communal aid to private nursery schools, something previously permitted. After vigorous protests, communes were re-allowed to subsidize 'écoles maternelles libres' by a 'rectificatif' to the November laws of 8 January 1942. But in many places Catholics remained confused or ignorant of the change. It was not until a group of teachers from Lyon wrote to Pétain in late 1942 that many Catholics became aware of it. But attempts by the Church hierarchy to have 'écoles maternelles libres' included in the law of 2 November itself met with no success. In a letter to Pétain of 24 September 1943, Mgr. Aubry argued that 'écoles maternelles libres' were unfairly discriminated against. Should they be 'classes enfantines' in an 'école primaire privée', he argued, then they would be eligible for State aid. Yet while Pétain sympathised, Aubry's protests accomplished nothing. The Vichy position had been established earlier in a note of 21 August 1942. This had argued against any further extension of the law of 2 November to either private 'écoles maternelles' or 'écoles primaires supérieures' lest this appeared to be too great an interference with the statute of 'enseignement public' as

1. JO 8 janvier 1942, p.130
2. 'Les Communes peuvent subventionner les écoles maternelles libres', in OR d'Aix 11 octobre 1942, no.29, p.349
3. AN F17 13365, Letter of Mgr Aubry to Pétain, 24 September 1943
4. AN F17 13390, 'Note' of 21 August 1942
established by the law of 1886. This is a good illustration of how the latent anticlericalism of the Ministry of Education was coming to the fore with Bonnard now in charge.

This anticlericalism was also to destroy any prospects Catholics had of reviving the law of 15 October 1940 on the Caisse Unique. The Church, of course, had never accepted Carcopino's argument that the Caisse Unique was a potentially divisive issue, especially in the village. Instead, Catholics claimed the very opposite, believing it a formula for national unity. To illustrate their point, they cited the examples of Caisses Uniques already in existence at Lyon, Auch, St. Etienne and Rive-de-Gier which had received a stay of execution until 1 October 1942. These were seen as models of what a Caisse should be. Great play was made of how they supplied free meals for needy pupils and how they provided holidays for thousands of children without contributors withdrawing their donations as Carcopino had predicted. Rather the Caisse at Lyon had received 4,000,000F by mid 1942. As a measure of protest at the coming dissolution of the Caisses Uniques, the Comité Diocésaine des Ecoles Libres de Lyon recommended that, in future, every municipal council requesting the creation of a

1. SR de Lyon 24 juillet 1942, no.35, p.386
2. ibid
3. ibid, 6 novembre 1942, no.50, p.509
4. ibid, 24 juillet 1942, no.35, p.386
new Caisse des Ecoles Privées, in conformity with the law of 2 November 1941, should include a paragraph in its statutes expressing regret at not being able to co-operate with the 'école publique' in the task of national unity.'

Similarly, the Church hierarchy argued that the forthcoming dissolution of the remaining Caisses Uniques would create deep divisions within the nation. In a note to Pétain of 28 July 1942, Mgr. Chappoulie, representing the ACA, claimed, 'le maintien de deux caisses distinctes, malgré l'avis contraire d'une municipalité, ne peut tendre souvent qu'à menacer l'union en paraissant encourager les unes ou les autres à ne s'intéresser qu'aux seuls enfants indigents dont la famille partagent leurs propres idées'. Always sympathetic to Catholic demands, the Marshal instructed Jardel, his secretary general, to write to Bonnard to see whether it would be possible to bring about some slight modification to the law of 2 November 1941. In a letter to Bonnard of 8 August 1942, Jardel inquired whether in special cases, with the agreement of the municipal council, a Caisse Unique could be set up. 'Cette modification minime', continued Jardel, 'donnerait plus de souplesse au système et permettrait, assez logiquement, d'organiser une caisse unique dans les

1. SR de Lyon 6 novembre 1942, no.50, p.509
2. AN 2 AG 496 CC78 A, 'Note relative à une demande en faveur de l'établissement, dans certaines communes, d'une caisse des écoles uniques, fonctionnant à la fois pour les écoles publiques et privées', Chappoulie to Pétain, 28 July 1942
3. AN 2 AG 496 CC78 A, Letter of Jardel to Bonnard, 8 August 1942
localités où l'état d'esprit y tendrait, ce qui semble être digne
d'encouragement'.

Characteristically, Bonnard was slow to answer this request. It took
a further two letters before the Education Minister could be provoked
into a response. When he finally did reply on 15 December 1942, he
stated that he had permitted a further lease of life for those Caisse
Uniques already in existence, pending negotiations, but argued against
the creation of any more. This he thought unwise on four grounds.
Firstly, he pointed out that the State school was dependent solely on
the Caisse des Ecoles Publiques for its survival. A Caisse Unique would
dissipate its funding even further. Secondly, he was against a Caisse
Unique because it would mean the 'école privée' was subventioned twice,
one by the Caisse and, secondly, through the law of 2 November 1941. In
his view, Catholic schools were already receiving sufficient aid through
State subsidies. Thirdly, Bonnard invoked legal precedent claiming that
when the Caisse des Ecoles Publiques had been established by the law of
16 August 1867, it had never been the intention of the Conseil d'Etat to
extend this to the 'école privée'. And, finally, he argued that the
existence of two separate Caisses still contributed to national unity
because both were administered by local committees comprising largely
the same people.

1. AN 2 AG 496 CC78 A, Letter of Jardel to Bonnard, 22 September 1942,
and letter of Lavagne to Gaît, Directeur Adjoint du Cabinet du
Ministre Secrétaire d'Etat A l'Education Nationale, 23 November 1942
2. AN 2 AG 496 CC78 A, Letter of Bonnard to Jardel, 15 December 1942
This reasoning carried little weight with the Marshal's Cabinet Civil. In his attempt to discredit the idea of a Caisse Unique, Bonnard had employed a number of questionable arguments. Responding to the Education Minister on 29 December 1942, Jardel began by pointing out the fact that the Caisse des Ecoles did not constitute the sole source of funding for State schools. They also received direct assistance from the national budget. Nor did Jardel see any reason why Catholic schools should not be subsidized twice over. In any case, this would not always be so. In order to receive State aid a school had to fulfil a number of stringent conditions as laid down by the law of 2 November 1941. Furthermore, Jardel took issue with Bonnard's use of legal precedent. This no longer applied because the law of 15 October 1940 had abrogated the relevant clauses in the law of 16 August 1867, which had not been re-established by the November legislation of 1941. And, finally, Jardel explained that Pétain considered the unity Bonnard envisaged, with the two separate Caisses, as too frail. He continued, 'Cet argument fait apparaître la fragilité des motifs invoqués contre la constitution d'une caisse unique; l'union de fait semble devoir être consacrée par la possibilité pour les communes, lorsqu'elles le désirent, de fusionner les deux caisses'. As a solution Jardel again proposed a modification to the law of 2 November 1941. This would allow, in special instances, the

1. AN 2 AG 496 CC78 A, Letter of Jardel to Bonnard, 29 December 1942
creation of a Caisse Unique as long as the initiative came from the municipal council.

Dragging his heels as always it was not until 27 February 1943 that Bonnard replied to these proposals. Again he raised a number of objections to the Caisse Unique. In a great number of communes, he maintained, the Caisses des Ecoles were the sole source of income for several schools, something borne out by other reports. Nevertheless, Bonnard agreed to consider the possibility of further Caisses Uniques as long as agreement was reached with the local municipal council. But, he added, such a step would require lengthy legal discussions which might delay progress. He was true to his word. It was not until 6 May 1943 that the Education Ministry produced a draft law on the Caisse Unique. Like the draft proposed by Jardel at the end of December 1942, a Caisse Unique could only be created on the initiative and agreement of the municipal council. But unlike the earlier suggestions, it specified in detail the composition of the 'conseil d'administration' for the Caisse. This would include the mayor, the president, the Inspecteur Primaire de la Circonscription, a representative of the municipal council, one member apiece of 'enseignement public' and 'privé', and

1. AN 2 AG 496 CC78 A, Letter from Gait, replying on behalf of Bonnard, to Lavagne, 27 February 1943
2. AN F17 13390, Report of General Inspector Garonne to Bonnard, 6 June 1944
3. AN 2 AG 496 CC78 A, 'Projet de loi relative aux caisses des écoles', 6 May 1943
between six and twelve additional members designated by the Prefect. All in all, it was a far larger committee than originally laid down by the law of 15 October 1940, and one far more under the central control of the Prefecture.

In retrospect, it appears that the Education Ministry not only specified such a large administrative committee with the intention of keeping clerical influence to a minimum, but also to delay further any steps towards a new law on the Caisse Unique. Thus, while in a letter to Bonnard of 7 May 1943 Lavagne welcomed the new initiative, the following day he expressed reservations about the Education Ministry's proposals. The composition of the administrative committee was, he claimed, against the traditions and rules of French law, although he did not explain why. What seems to have been in the back of his mind was the worry that the Church might consider it too partisan. Instead, Lavagne proposed that the 'conseil d'administration' should comprise the mayor, president, a member of both 'enseignement public' and 'privé', and just two to six members selected by the Prefect. On the occasions when the committee required further advice it would be empowered to call upon the services of the Academy Inspector or the Directeur Diocésain de l'Enseignement Libre. This would ensure impartiality and true collaboration between Church and State.

How negotiations continued after May 1943 is unknown as no further

1. AN 2 AG 496 CC78 A, Letter of Lavagne to Bonnard, 7 May 1943
2. AN 2 AG 496 CC78 A, Letter of Lavagne to Bonnard, 8 May 1943
correspondence appears to have survived. However, Bonnard's obduracy was to win through as no law introducing a Caisse Unique was to grace the pages of the Journal Officiel in the dying months of the Vichy regime. Accordingly, the Church continued to protest about the inadequacies of the Caisses des Ecoles Privées. At the start of 1943 La Semaine Religieuse de Nîmes complained that the resources they provided were inadequate. For their part, APEL and Mgr. Beaussart also made their dissatisfaction known. But what the episode of the Caisse des Ecoles reveals are the huge obstacles that now confronted the Church should it wish to claim further aid from the Vichy government. Whereas Pétain's Cabinet Civil remained pro-clerical and overtly sympathetic to Catholic demands, it was confronted with an anticlerical Ministry under Bonnard, out of reach at Paris, and unwilling to countenance any further modification to the law of 2 November 1941. It is a vivid illustration of the declining influence and control of Marshal Pétain.

Similarly, the obduracy of the Education Ministry was to undermine proposals for subsidizing private secondary schools. These were, of course, excluded from the provisions of the law of 2 November 1941. As a result, they continued to suffer material hardships. In a letter to Pétain of 24 September 1943, Mgr Aubry explained that several Catholic

1. SR de Nîmes 3 janvier 1943, no.1, p.6
2. AN F17 13390 'Note' from Comité National de l'Enseignement Libre, 8 October 1942
secondary schools were desperately short of funds.¹ Later in a letter of March 1944 to Mgr. Brunhes, bishop of Montpellier, Charles Chevallier, president of APEL for the Hérault, wrote, 'La fermeture des écoles annoncée par les journaux pose des questions très graves tant pour les familles que pour les professeurs, particulièrement pour ceux de l'enseignement secondaire libre qui, ne recevant aucune subvention de l'Etat, vont se trouver sans resources.'² To alleviate this situation, the bishop endorsed Chevallier's suggestion that parents should contribute 100F each towards the upkeep of 'enseignement secondaire libre'. Yet it was realised that such charitable initiatives were no substitute for fully-fledged subsidies provided by the State.

So far, however, the Church had received only minor concessions. These had come with Carcopino's reorganisation of secondary education on 2 September 1941. Among the restructuring of the curriculum and the examination system, this had also reintroduced fees for all children over the age of fourteen, the 'troisième classe', of State 'lycées'.³ Carcopino justified this move on the grounds that free education was

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1. AN F17 13365, Letter of Mgr Aubry to Pétain, 24 September 1943
2. Letter of Chevallier to Brunhes, no date (March 1944?), in SR de Montpellier 18 mars 1944, no.12, p.156
abused by parents of rich children as they were the only ones who could afford the boarding charges for the classes after the 'troisième', whereas poorer pupils had to drop out. In the towns, maintained Carcopino, where boarding was not necessary, the rich were even more privileged. By reintroducing fees, then, he hoped to remove these unfair advantages; but to assist those clever pupils from more modest backgrounds special grants would be made available to enable them to continue their education. Yet an indirect effect of this restructuring was that Catholic secondary schools, which were all fee-paying, were able to compete on more equal terms with their State counterparts.

Catholics also saw in these modifications a means of strengthening their case for State subsidies to private secondary schools. Because the obligatory school leaving age was fourteen, it was pointed out that if children in a subsidized Church primary school left at eleven to continue their education at a Catholic 'lycée' then their schooling for those three years ought to be free.

Nor was this point lost on the Ministry of Health and the Family which discussed the possibility of subsidizing Catholic secondary schools in May 1942. Later on 11 August 1942 Vice-Admiral Platon, as head of the Commissariat Général à la Famille, put a number of proposals

1. AN F17 13390, Letter of Peyssard, Chargé de Mission at the Ministry of Health and the Family, to Couissan, Directeur Adjoint du Cabinet du M.le Ministre Secrétaire d'Etat à l'Education Nationale, 29 May 1942
to Bonnard.' He began by explaining how children between eleven and fourteen in Catholic secondary schools were at a disadvantage. 'Il y a une anomalie à cet enfant la fin de sa scolarité obligatoire - de 11 à 14 ans - et que cette scolarité, gratuite dans l'enseignement primaire privé, n'est pas subventionnée dans l'enseignement secondaire libre.' This, he continued, 'constitue une lacune dans les dispositions prises par le précédent Ministre de l'Education Nationale à l'égard de l'enseignement privé.' As a solution, Platon suggested a modified voucher system whereby every prospective candidate for 'enseignement secondaire privé' would receive a 'carte de scolarité' at the age of eleven. But to qualify for this 'carte' a pupil would need to have proved his worth by having passed the Diplôme d'Études Primaires Préparatoires (DEPP), the new entry examination for secondary education established by Carcopino on 15 August 1941. Once at a Catholic 'lycée' the child would then use the 'carte' to claim a subvention valued at 300F each term. In conclusion, Platon claimed that in putting forward these proposals the Ministry of Health and the Family was acting in the interest of the family and not as the 'porte-parole' of 'enseignement libre'. Unfortunately it is not known how far Platon had consulted with the Church, but there can be little doubting the strong clerical influence that still permeated the Ministry since Chevalier's days as Minister.

1. AN F17 13341, Letter of Vice-Admiral Platon to Bonnard, 11 August 1942
Bonnard remained unimpressed. Already on 10 August 1942 Chenevier, the Director of Secondary Education, had written to his Minister criticizing Platon's scheme. Firstly, he argued that the proposals did not carry the whole support of the Church. While Gerlier was enthusiastic, Suhard had expressed his satisfaction with the results obtained by the law of 2 November 1941. Secondly, he pointed out that because all pupils would have to have passed the DEPP to obtain their 'carte', this would mean all private secondary schools would be subsidized. This set a dangerous precedent as what was to stop Catholic primary schools demanding the same rights. Thirdly, he was against assisting private secondary schools because, by and large, they provided a poor education and attracted inferior candidates for the 'baccalauréat'. 'Subventionner ces boîtes à bachot serait un scandale', he remarked contemptuously. Finally, and most importantly, Chenevier took issue with the whole premise of Platon's argument. While it was compulsory for all children to be educated in a primary school until the age of fourteen, there was no obligation for them to move over to a 'lycée'. Thus, within secondary education at least, the Education Ministry was unprepared to countenance any concessions to the Church.

Such opposition ensured that Platon's proposals were shelved and subsequently forgotten. Yet the Church was to fare better with higher education. This arose largely by chance. At a meeting of 27 October 1942

1. AN F17 13341, Letter of Chenevier to Bonnard, 10 August 1942
between Suhard, Pétain and Laval, the Cardinal raised the possibility of subsidizing the Catholic and Protestant institutes of higher education. The matter was taken up again two days later at a dinner attended by Suhard, Gerlier, Chappoullie, Valerio Valeri, Bérard, Bonnard, Laval and Pétain. Here Suhard and Gerlier remarked that of the 500,000,000F allocated to Catholic primary education for 1942-1943, 15,000,000F had not been used up. Why not use this, they asked, to fund Catholic and Protestant higher education. The meeting proved enthusiastic and a law was introduced on 31 December 1942 providing 'subventions exceptionnelles' for the 'facultés libres' of higher education. This granted 5,000,000F to the Institut Catholique at Paris, 4,000,000F to Lille, 2,950,000F to Lyon, 1,450,000F to Anger and 800,000F to Toulouse. The remaining 1,000,000F was accorded to the Protestant faculties at Paris, Montpellier and Aix-en-Provence. However, this was reduced to 800,000F on Laval's objections. He was annoyed that Boegner

1. AN 2 AG 543 CC 141 A, 'Note' of 14 December 1942
2. Law of 31 December 1942 in JQ 1 janvier 1943, no.1
3. AN 2 AG 493 CC74 B, 'Répartition de la Subvention Exceptionnelle à l'enseignement supérieur libre, 1943'
4. AN 2 AG 496 CC78 A, 'Répartition de la Subvention Exceptionnelle à l'Enseignement Supérieur Libre au titre de l'année 1942'. The subsidies for the Protestant faculties were divided as follows: Faculté Libre de Théologie Protestante de Paris, 400,000F; Faculté Libre de Théologie Protestante du Montpellier, 250,000F; and Faculté Libre de Théologie Protestante d'Aix-en-Provence, 150,000F.
and Protestant professors at Paris and Montpellier had chosen to speak out against the deportation of Jews.

The generosity of the award to the Catholic institutes provoked warm thanks. Mgr Costes, bishop of Angers and Rector of the Faculty at Angers wrote to congratulate Pétain on 'l'œuvre d'élévation spirituelle et de réforme morale.' Similarly, Mgr Brenolle, at the Institut Catholique at Paris, wrote to Bonnard on 3 March 1943 expressing his personal gratitude.2 'Il est encouragéant', he declared, 'de trouver à la tête de l'Instruction publique un Ministre qui veuille bien considérer que l'enseignement supérieur catholique est une partie de l'enseignement supérieur français et qu'il mérite à le titre sa bienveillance et son aide.' Nevertheless, Bonnard's generosity was not so liberal the following year. Despite ambitious requests by the Church hierarchy, the amount allocated for 1943-44 was reduced to between 5,000,000F to 6,000,000F with the Institut Catholique receiving the largest share, 1,300,000F.3 This brought vigorous protests from the pro-Rector of Paris,4 but Mgr Chappoulie, recognising the real

1. AN 2 AG 496 CC78 A, Letter of Mgr Costes to Pétain, 19 April 1943
2. AN F17 13346, Letter of Mgr Brenolle to Bonnard, 3 March 1943
3. AN F17 13365, 'Note sur les subventions aux Universités Libres', 16 May 1944
4. AN F17 13365, Letter from the pro-Rector of the Institut Catholique at Paris to Bonnard, 10 January 1944
possibility of subventions for higher education disappearing altogether under Bonnard, modestly requested the same amount of 5,000,000F for the following year."

Indeed, by 1944 the Church could not deny that it had obtained far more financial assistance than it could ever have originally anticipated. Faced with the frightening prospect of closing down many of its schools in 1940-1941, the Church had also been confronted with a government which, while outwardly sympathetic to Catholic aspirations, was inwardly very wary about introducing any potentially divisive and controversial legislation. Through its single-mindedness of purpose, the Church had overcome this apprehension. Admittedly it had not secured the implementation of EPS, yet it had maneuvered itself into a strong position to reassert its authority in education. Within Western France and parts of the South it seemed as though Catholic schools would displace State education altogether. But the Church never enjoyed the opportunity to exploit this position. First came the obduracy and anticlericalism of Bonnard. From the onset he was unwilling to build on the law of 2 November 1941. Then came the Liberation and the rescinding of all Vichy legislation. On 28 March 1945, the Consultative Assembly ended subsidies from July that year. Thus by 1945 the Church could not say that its financial position was much stronger than it had been in 1939. What it could claim was that in the law of 2 November 1941

1. AN 2 AG 496 CC78 A, "Note" of 26 July 1944 of Mgr Chappoulie
a vitally important precedent had been set for State aid to private schools, a precedent that would be taken up successfully in the Loi Debré of 1959.
In 1940 the French Church was in a confident mood. As in 1870, the shock of defeat produced a sudden outburst of religious feeling: the churches were full again; pilgrimages were back in fashion; and saints were all the vogue. To several Catholics military disaster was divine retribution for the sins of the Third Republic. At the same time, they took great hope in the new authoritarian regime at Vichy. The ideals of the National Revolution largely accorded with those of the Church. Small wonder, therefore, that the Church was quick to take advantage of this moment to extend its influence further. Education offered the greatest promise. On the one hand, the Church sought to strengthen the position of its own educational system. On the other, it hoped to reassert its authority over children in the State school.

In what ways did the Church seek to fortify its own educational system? To begin with, not all areas of Catholic education were considered to be in need of extensive change. For example, there were few attempts to revise the curriculum. When in 1944 pupils in confessional schools returned for the 'rentrée', it was almost as though the previous four years had not happened: the lessons and the textbooks were all largely the same. Only the picture of Pétain was missing from the classroom wall. Certainly the shock of the defeat did not produce anything like the same degree of introspection in Catholic schools as it did in State education. In 1940 the Church did not seriously question the values it already taught the young. The function of Catholic
education, at both a primary and a secondary level, remained the same: to teach the principles of Christianity. Only a minority of liberal Catholics conceded that Church schools had not done enough to ensure the Christian upbringing of the young. To rectify this, the Church was prepared to build on developments before the war to improve catechismal teaching. Elsewhere too — for instance, in the teaching of history — the Church laid greater stress on the Christian purpose of education. But, overall, it considered that it already provided a sufficiently broad moral upbringing. This, in part, helps to explain why Catholic schools were so reluctant to embrace fully many of Vichy's schemes to strengthen the moral fibre of French youth.

Although the lessons of Catholic schools remained much as before, the Church did seek to improve the legal and financial standing of its educational system. In particular, it hoped to overturn the laws governing the religious orders and those excluding confessional schools from public funds. In neither case was Vichy prepared to give in completely to the radical demands presented by the Church. Nonetheless, the regime did modify the infamous 'lois d'exception' of 1901 and 1904. During the Occupation the religious orders enjoyed a degree of legal security that they had not known since the 1870s. But this meant little to the monks and nuns themselves. They had long since taught outside of the law and, indeed, would continue to do so after 1944. A more substantial achievement was the law of 2 November 1941. This improved the material position of Catholic education and led to an impressive
rise in the numbers in private elementary schools. In several parts of France the 'école privée' threatened to overtake the 'école publique'. However, the Church was unable to maintain this momentum. With the abrogation of all Vichy's educational and religious measures, in 1945 Catholic schools were in much the same predicament as they had been in 1939. Nonetheless, the Church had succeeded in establishing a precedent for State aid to private schools, a precedent which would be successfully invoked in 1951 and 1959.

The other overall aim of the Church had been to extend its influence over children in the State school. To accomplish this it hoped to re-establish Christianity within the lessons of the 'école publique'. It is no surprise, therefore, that the overwhelming majority of Catholics welcomed Chevalier's measures on the 'devoirs envers Dieu' and the catechism. At long last, it seemed as though the Church had recovered its right to educate all children in accordance with the teachings of Christ. But appearances were deceptive. It was unrealistic of the Church to believe that it could overturn the 'neutralité' of the public school in such a short time. Instead much of what it had done was to have re-awakened anticlerical arguments which had lain dormant for years. In other regards too, the Church was unable to consolidate its influence over State education. Momentarily, at least, it did manage to silence the 'instituteurs'. Yet this achievement never amounted to much more than the settling of old grievances.
Thus the Church accomplished far less under Vichy than it had originally envisaged. The initial hope of 1940 soon gave way to disappointment and frustration. Why was the Church so unsuccessful? Firstly, wartime was not the ideal environment in which to seek a solution to the schools question. The demarcation line and the German presence ensured that it was impossible to find anything more than temporary solutions to long-term problems. Secondly, the Church itself was awkwardly placed to negotiate with the government. As we have seen, the formulation and conduct of educational policy was largely the province of the ACA. Yet it was not until the autumn of 1941 that the assembly created an office with direct links to the Education Ministry at Paris. Even when this was established it did not function smoothly. Negotiations were further complicated by the presence of such pressure groups as APEL and DRAC. They often pursued radical policies which went against those of the hierarchy. Thirdly, the Church was internally divided as to how it hoped to achieve its aims. While broad consensus was reached on the need to strengthen Catholic education and to influence children in the State school, little agreement existed as to how these overall objectives could be best achieved. Traditionalists - prominent in the middle ranks of the hierarchy and among bodies such as the FNC - wanted to see the complete abrogation of all the secular laws on education. For them, Vichy was a moment of revenge over the 'laïcité' of the old Republic. Others, such as Cardinals Liénart and Suhard, were more moderate men. It is true that they sought the removal
of the secular laws, but they preferred a more gradual and conciliatory approach. Then there were a small number of liberal Catholics fronted by Mounier. They too had no liking for the hardened laicism of the past, yet they did not believe that the Church should use the occasion of military defeat to overhaul the country's institutions. Thus French Catholicism under Vichy was never a monolithic bloc. As in the inter-war period it comprised several different elements each of which had its own vision of the future. Often the arguments between these groups were more acrimonious than those disagreements between Church and State.

A fourth reason why the Church accomplished so little during the Occupation was the nature of the regime itself. Ultimately the Church was dependent on the government to modify the secular laws; yet Vichy was never as pro-clerical as has sometimes been alleged. During the early months of the Occupation there were a large number of prominent Catholics in the government. Apart from Pétain himself, these comprised Weygand, Alibert, Barthélémy, Bouthillier and Caziot. They welcomed the support the Church gave to the regime and valued religion as a means by which to preserve social stability. But they were divided as to how far they were prepared to go to help the Church. Some, including Pétain, were prepared to concede to the most radical demands, whereas others were afraid that extreme anti-secularist policies might undermine the frail unity surrounding the Marshal. In any case, the influence of Catholicism at Vichy was always moderated by the presence of anticlericals such as Darlan and Laval. They cared little for the Church and were reluctant to come to its assistance. With Laval's return to
power in April 1942, the government became even less clerical in complexion. By 1944 Pétain was one of the few remaining Catholics at Vichy.

The changes in the religious complexion of the régime were reflected in the shifts in educational policy. This underwent a number of transformations. The initial phase was largely destructive. It was begun by the first three Ministers of Education - Rivaud, Mireaux and Ripert - and lasted for the opening six months of the regime. As traditional right-wing Catholics, they genuinely wanted to help the Church. Accordingly they were prepared to dismantle the powers of the 'instituteurs' and were happy to grant a few minor concessions to Catholic schools. Yet they were unwilling to concede to more radical proposals, in particular the re-establishment of the catechism within the lessons of the public school. Concerned above all with the maintenance of unity, they were reluctant to introduce any measure which might provoke religious disharmony. The second phase - undertaken by Chevalier - lasted little over two months, but marked the high point of clerical influence at Vichy. A far more devout man than his three predecessors, Chevalier expressed tremendous sympathy for the aims of the Church. Should he have survived in office, then it is likely that he would have revised considerably the secular laws. Ultimately, however, his extreme clericalism and high-handed methods alienated many of his colleagues and led to his fall. The third phase - inaugurated by Carcopino - lasted barely over a year and represented a partial return
to the principles of 'laïcité'. As a moderate man anxious to reconcile all opinions, Carcopino wanted to find a solution to the schools question. Yet he soon discovered that the circumstances of wartime made his task impossible. The final phase - initiated by Bonnard - lasted until the end of the Occupation. It was characterised by its anticlericalism and negativism. As a non-believer Bonnard had no time for the Church and accomplished little in the remaining months of the regime.

This study has, therefore, emphasised the limitations to many of Vichy's educational and religious measures. Apart from the reintroduction of the catechism, these were not as radical or as clerical as is sometimes believed. Nor did these policies mark a significant breach with the past. During the inter-war period several governments wanted to amend the secular laws. Indeed, in 1938 and 1939 the Daladier administration was contemplating many of the changes which Vichy was later to introduce. Yet these governments were reluctant to act. Not only were they worried about provoking religious division in the countryside, they were also frightened of upsetting the religious sensibilities of Republican deputies, many of whom remained committed to the ideals of 'laïcité'. Vichy did not have to trouble itself about parliament, but it did take care, whenever possible, not to incite anticlericalism.

As Vichy became less favourably disposed towards clerical demands, the Church itself began to drift away from the regime. At first, Catholics had been eager to rally round the government. Several bishops
abandoned their normal reserve and hailed Pétain as the saviour of France. Thereafter many of them retained their loyalty to the Marshal, but became wary of his colleagues. Their move away from Vichy came earlier than has sometimes been thought. Usually the Church is portrayed as a steadfast supporter of the regime until Laval's return to power in April 1942. Yet, as we have seen, the ACA moderated its attitude à propos Vichy as early as January 1941. Not only were Church leaders worried about the legitimacy of the government, they were also disappointed by its policies. To several of the hierarchy, the rescinding of Chevalier's legislation on the catechism was an indication of the limits to which Vichy was prepared to go to meet Catholic demands. Admittedly, however, it was not until April 1942 that the Church was forced to make real choices. Laval's return to power, the appointment of Bonnard, the stepping up of measures against the Jews and the introduction of STO, all further alienated the Church from Vichy. Nonetheless, this did not stop Catholic leaders from seeking additional concessions. Within education they sought to consolidate the gains that they had already made either through a concordat or through a statute for 'enseignement libre'. They failed to realise that should the Germans win the war all these advantages would be swept away. Yet several of the hierarchy had been brought up in a different age. They were still fighting the religious battles of the 1880s and early 1900s. As a result, they were unable to give a clear lead to the faithful. It was left to members of the lower clergy and Catholic youth
movements to make an emphatic stand against Nazism.

The Occupation was, therefore, an unhappy episode in the history of French Catholicism. The Church had tried - and failed - to obtain a solution to the schools question. In so doing, it had exacerbated old quarrels and had divided the faithful. The Church had also compromised itself with Vichy. It is little surprise that at the Liberation members of the hierarchy were criticized severely by both Left and Right for the ambivalent role they had played during the war. Yet, as we have seen, the Church was not an unqualified supporter of Vichy. It began to have its doubts about the regime much earlier than has sometimes been realised. Furthermore, the history of Vichy contained important lessons for the future. To several Catholics, it was clear that if the Church genuinely wanted to find an answer to the schools question then it was necessary to adopt a more conciliatory approach and to abandon the battle-cries of the past. Some quickly learnt these lessons; for others, they have yet to be understood.
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| F17 13338 | Activité personnelle du ministre: divers |
| F17 13339 | Activité personnelle du ministre: années 1942 -1943 |
| F17 13340 | Activité personnelle du ministre: 1944 |
| F17 13341 | Projets de conférences, statistiques |
| F17 13342 | Correspondance Ministérielle 1942 |
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