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# Towards a New Understanding of the Child: Catholic Mobilisation and Modern Pedagogy in Spain, 1900–1936

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## Abstract

*Despite its importance, historical scholarship has largely ignored Catholic education as a historical force. This article argues that a closer look at Catholic education in Spain in the first decades of the twentieth century can widen our understanding of educational modernity and at the same time help us to grasp better the specificity and contradictions of religious political mobilisation in Europe. Catholic pedagogues and schools responded to the increasing politicisation of education, the changing demands of upper- and middle-class parents and challenges posed by the new psychological and pedagogical knowledge with fundamental changes in their educational practices. The article identifies the main developments in this contradictory shift, concluding that, first, it is highly misleading simply to identify the ‘new pedagogy’ of the early twentieth century with liberal democracy. This questions a sterile dichotomy of collectivism versus individualism in analysing social movements in the twentieth century. Second, the case study points to both the power and the inherent limits of Catholic mobilisation.*

## I

The culture wars between Catholicism and anticlerical secular groups were a major feature of European history for long periods of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.<sup>1</sup> Recent scholarship has paid special attention not only to the ideological framework and practices of liberal anticlericalism, but also to the responses of the Catholic Church to these challenges. Catholics throughout Europe not only tried

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<sup>1</sup> Christopher Clark and Wolfram Kaiser, eds., *Culture Wars: Secular–Catholic Conflict in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

to fend off liberal attacks, but, especially in the decades before the Second World War, also developed an offensive approach of re-Christianisation, which attempted to re-conquer the modern world and heal the problems of modernity.<sup>2</sup>

A crucial battle ground of the culture wars was – and in many ways still is – child rearing. The Church saw education as its traditional domain, through which it could achieve a thoroughly Christian moral order. In contrast, secular liberals and socialists held that only the elimination of Church influence in educational matters would pave the way for the emancipation of man and a modern social order. The scale of conflict and the passions involved in the confrontation point to the fact that the fight was not merely over the teaching of religion, but touched fundamental questions of the relationship between the individual, society and the state.

Although secular education expanded and state control over the educational system increased, the Catholic Church remained one of the main protagonists in child rearing in the twentieth century, and questions of religion remained at the centre of educational debates. In a wide variety of countries, clergy and lay Catholics shaped educational legislation, sat on school boards, and reached a mass audience for their educational ideals through newspapers, books and sermons.

They had considerable autonomy in teaching religion in the state schools and, moreover, ran private schools that educated important segments of the school population, especially of the upper and middle classes. Even in France, where the state secularised the public system and outlawed the educational activities of the religious congregations in 1904, the Church was able to maintain influence in the educational field.<sup>3</sup>

Despite its importance, however, we know very little about Catholic education in the twentieth century. The rich scholarship on the New Pedagogy movement has to a very large extent ignored Catholic teaching and religious issues in general.<sup>4</sup> This lack of interest is in part a result of a dominant understanding of religion and Catholic instruction as part of the old, traditional world, against which the educational reform movements tried to establish modern forms of child rearing based on the new human sciences. Many scholars still see the development of education since the nineteenth century as characterised by a struggle between modern, secular and democratic pedagogy and traditional religious forms of education, in which the former ultimately prevailed.

<sup>2</sup> The response was, however not uniform. On the contrary, a broad spectrum of political responses can be distinguished, ranging from Christian-democratic options to strands of belligerent religious authoritarianism. Martin Conway and T. C. Buchanan, eds., *Political Catholicism in Europe, 1918–1965* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

<sup>3</sup> Sarah A. Curtis, *Educating the Faithful: Religion, Schooling, and Society in Nineteenth-Century France* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2000), esp. 170–2. See also Raymond Grew and Patrick J. Harrigan, ‘The Catholic Contribution to Universal Schooling in France, 1850–1906’, *Journal of Modern History*, 57 (1985), 211–47.

<sup>4</sup> However, there have been some attempts in recent years to address the latter issue: see, e.g., Meike Sophia Baader, *Erziehung als Erlösung. Transformationen des Religiösen in der Reformpädagogik* (Weinheim: Juventa, 2005); Jürgen Oelkers, Fritz Osterwald and Heinz-Elmar Tenorth, eds., *Das verdrängte Erbe. Pädagogik im Kontext von Religion und Theologie* (Weinheim and Basel: Beltz, 2003).

This narrative, however, has a number of shortcomings. First, although it is true that in many countries the Church as an institution lost influence in the educational sector, it is misleading to draw a straight line of decline. Instead, more often than not, the Church was able to maintain considerable influence in educational matters or, as in Fascist Italy, to extend it.<sup>5</sup> More importantly, to narrate the story of education in terms of modernity versus tradition gives a simplified account of educational modernity, passing over both its diversity and the contradictions as it developed after 1900. It seems therefore more rewarding to look at the conflicts as clashes of different projects of modernity.<sup>6</sup>

A closer look at Catholic educational debates and practices can widen our understanding of educational modernity and at the same time help us to grasp better the specificity and contradictions of the broader Catholic political mobilisation in Europe before the Second World War. A discussion of Catholic education allows us to understand more fully the social and political consequences of the new pedagogical thought after 1900, which is generally linked to social liberalisation and political democratisation. As I shall demonstrate, Catholic education participated in the struggle for educational modernity as a struggle over the redefinition of the whole social and cultural order, encompassing the whole personality of the students. In this struggle no exclusive relationship between progressive thought and liberal politics existed. Instead, the developments were much more muddled. The new pedagogical thinking was in itself contradictory, and so allowed for both democratic and new authoritarian, and even totalitarian, social practices and political projects.

In tracing the transformation of Catholic education in some detail, I want to shed light on the connection between educational practices, the mobilisation of children and Catholic politics after 1900. I shall describe how Catholic educators, teachers and schools in Spain responded to the increasing politicisation of educational discourse, the changing demands on education made by upper- and middle-class parents and the challenges posed by the new psychological and pedagogical knowledge. In this endeavour I find it helpful to distinguish between the educational institutions as social and as symbolic spaces. On the one hand, schools are places of interaction and exchange between ‘suppliers’ and ‘customers’ of education, set within a wider public sphere. On the other hand, twentieth-century schools were ‘utopian spaces’, trying to implement in the present ideal models of social order and interaction.<sup>7</sup>

The Spanish case is an especially worthwhile object of study, as the country witnessed in the early twentieth century a particular severe confrontation between secular and religious educational models. Moreover, Catholicism exhibited in Spain a more overtly anti-modern worldview and uncompromising stance against the

<sup>5</sup> Richard J. Wolff, ‘Catholicism, Fascism and Italian Education from the Riforma Gentile to the Carta Della Scuola, 1922–1939’, *History of Education Quarterly*, 20 (1980), 3–26.

<sup>6</sup> Christopher Clark, ‘The New Catholicism and the European Culture Wars’, in Clark and Kaiser, *Culture Wars*, 11–46, esp. 45 f.

<sup>7</sup> Heinz-Elmar Tenorth, ‘Erziehungsutopien zwischen Weimarer Republik und Drittem Reich’, in Wolfgang Hardtwig, ed., *Utopie und politische Herrschaft in Europa der Zwischenkriegszeit* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2003), 175–98, 177.

secularising forces than in most other European countries. It seems therefore a good test case for examining the influence and results of educational modernity for Catholicism in a more global perspective.

## II

The significant influence of the Catholic Church is one of the main features of the Spanish educational system in the early twentieth century. The Spanish state began only slowly to respond to the increased demand for education in the late nineteenth century. In a country weakened by a series of civil wars which created severe financial problems and hindered the creation of an effective administrative infrastructure, education was not of central concern. Until the Spanish–American war of 1898, the state largely left the educational field to the initiative of the Catholic Church. Through a host of religious orders the Church dramatically extended its influence over primary and especially secondary education, and despite growing criticism of the Catholic influence and various legislative attempts by liberal governments to curb it, was able to maintain its position more or less intact up to the outbreak of the Civil War in 1936.<sup>8</sup> Although reliable statistical evidence is hard to come by, the available sources suggest that Catholic private schools in the early 1930s taught at least a third of all primary students and more than half of all students in secondary education.<sup>9</sup>

The traumatic defeat in the Spanish–American War of 1898 was the starting point for an intense debate over the shortcomings of Spanish civilisation and nationhood, in which educational issues occupied a central place. Suddenly the high rates of illiteracy, inadequate schools and underpaid teaching staff became a national scandal. Most commentators agreed that only through a marked improvement in the underdeveloped educational system would a return to imperial greatness be possible.<sup>10</sup> More importantly, a large section of public opinion now began to share the conviction of the famous *Institución Libre de Enseñanza* (ILE, Free Institute of Education) that the powerful influence of the Church on education was the main obstacle to social

<sup>8</sup> The best book on the roots of the conflicts between church and state is still Yvonne Turin, *L'éducation et l'école en Espagne de 1874 à 1902* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1959). For developments up to 1936 see Carolyn P. Boyd, *Historia Patria: Politics, History and National Identity in Spain, 1875–1975* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 3–63; Pedro Cuesta Escudero, *La escuela en la reestructuración de la sociedad española (1900–1923)* (Madrid: Siglo XXI, 1994); Frances Lannon, *Privilege, Persecution, and Prophecy: The Catholic Church in Spain, 1875–1975* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 59–84; Mary Vincent, *Catholicism in the Second Spanish Republic: Religion and Politics in Salamanca 1930–1936* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 36–51. Information on Catholic education after 1939 can be found in Irene Palacio Lis and Cándido Ruiz Rodrigo, 'Educational Historiography of the Franco Regime: Analysis and Critical Review', *Paedagogica Historica*, 39 (2003), 339–60.

<sup>9</sup> Antonio Viñao Frago, *Escuela para todos. Educación y modernidad en la España de siglo XX*. (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2004), 191–6; Lannon, *Privilege*, 78–9.

<sup>10</sup> Sebastian Balfour, 'Riot, Regeneration and Reaction: Spain in the Aftermath of the 1898 Disaster', *Historical Journal*, 38 (1995), 405–23; Juan Pan-Montojo and José Alvarez Junco, eds., *Más se perdió en Cuba: España, 1898 y la crisis de fin de siglo* (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1998). See also David J. Ortiz, 'Redefining Public Education: Contestation, the Press, and Education in Regency Spain, 1885–1902', *Journal of Social History*, 35 (2001), 73–95.

modernisation and modern nation-building in Spain. Catholic pedagogy appeared in this perspective as hopelessly backward, rooted in a pre-modern world far removed from the needs and challenges of modern society. In the following decades the Institute became a major centre for the promotion of new international educational currents in Spain and exerted considerable influence in public debates and university training.<sup>11</sup> After the breakdown of the monarchy in 1931, *institucionalistas* took over leading positions in the ministry of public instruction and were a main force behind the educational reform legislation of the Second Republic. Its influence extended well into the ranks of teachers and school inspectors.<sup>12</sup>

Most historical research has concentrated on the development of this educational reform movement.<sup>13</sup> However, its concepts and politics did not go uncontested. In opposition to liberal reform the Church, together with large parts of the Catholic middle classes, vigorously defended the rights of the Church in educational matters. In their own explanation of the defeat of 1898 they denounced ‘rational’ education as the root of the spiritual and political decline of the Spanish nation since the Enlightenment.<sup>14</sup> Indeed, the frustrated legislative attempts by consecutive liberal governments after 1900 to expand state education and curb the influence of the Church led to a political mobilisation of both the liberal and the Catholic publics.

Both sides founded new journals and organisations to promote their interests. The political struggle over education intensified with the proclamation of the Second Republic in 1931. The new government under the leftist republican Manuel Azaña immediately tried to implement an educational reform agenda which promised not only the creation of new schools but also the expulsion of the Church from the educational system. Detailed reform legislation denied the Church any influence in state schools, removed religious symbols from the classrooms, banned religious orders from teaching and ordered the expulsion of the Jesuits.<sup>15</sup> Catholics responded to these attacks with large demonstrations and press campaigns. The campaigns met with some success. Aided by a lack of resources of the central government, Catholics were able to prevent the closing of Catholic schools and to maintain their local

<sup>11</sup> María del Mar del Pozo Andrés, ‘Channels by which the International Pedagogic Movement of the New School Spread throughout Spain’, in *History of International Relations in Education. Conference Papers of the International Standing Conference for the History of Education*, 2 vols. (Pécs, 1987), II, 101–17; Mariano Yela, ‘Las Ciencias. I. Las ciencias Humanas: Psicología, Sociología, Pedagogía’, in *Historia de España – Ramón Menéndez Pidal, Bd. 39/II: La edad de plata de la cultura española (1898–1936)* (Madrid: Espasa Calpe, 1996), 287–93.

<sup>12</sup> Mariano Pérez Galán, *La enseñanza en la segunda república española* (Madrid: Edición Cuadernos para el Diálogo, 1975).

<sup>13</sup> Manuel de Puelles Benítez, ‘Secularización y enseñanza en España (1874–1917)’, in José Luis García Delgado, ed., *España entre dos siglos (1875–1931), continuidad y cambio* (Madrid: Siglo XXI, 1991), 191–213. See also the best local studies to date: María del Mar del Pozo Andrés, *Urbanismo y educación. Política educativa y expansión escolar en Madrid (1900–1931)* (Alcalá de Henares: Universidad de Alcalá, 1999).

<sup>14</sup> This is a recurrent argument in Catholic journals of these years, for example the monthly Jesuit journal, *Razon y Fe*.

<sup>15</sup> Antonio Sánchez Rodríguez, *La batalla por la escuela. El régimen educativo en la constitución de la Segunda República* (Seville: Fundación Gesenian, 2003); Antonio Molero Pintado, *La Educación durante la Segunda República y la Guerra Civil (1931–1939)* (Madrid: Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia, 1991).

standing as providers of education in most parts of the country. After a centre-right government took office in November 1933, the secularisation of the school system came to a complete halt.<sup>16</sup> This did not imply, however, an end to the public battles. On the contrary, especially during the tenure of the Popular Front government in the first half of 1936, the conflict reached a new climax before the outbreak of civil war provided both sides with the opportunity to implement their educational ideas in the zones under their control.<sup>17</sup>

### III

The intense conflicts over educational policy have obscured the fact that under the partisan rhetoric important changes in Catholic education took place in the first decades of the twentieth century. First, the political struggle set in motion a movement towards greater unity and uniformity of Catholic educational enterprises. Catholic education was not as homogeneous as its opponents often argued. Instead, there existed a wide range of different initiatives. Schools for boys and girls were run separately and had different educational goals and regimes. Everyday life in fee-raising elite colleges differed considerably from education in free schools for the lower classes, which were run as welfare institutions. Moreover, the schools being run by a variety of religious orders with divergent educational outlooks, educational practices varied considerably. Finally, the cultural backgrounds of the Catholic teaching body were diverse. In response to the anticlerical legislation of the French Third Republic, a large number of religious teachers had migrated to Spain after 1904.<sup>18</sup>

However, the increased pressure of liberal governments and secular opinion on Catholic schools led to closer co-operation in educational activities. The most important results of this collaboration was the creation in 1929 of the influential Catholic pressure group the *Federación de Amigos de Enseñanza* (FAE, Federation of Friends of Education), and the establishment of the new educational journal *Atenas* in 1931. Both represented important sites of mutual exchange and educational debate across organisational boundaries.<sup>19</sup> Although internal differences persisted, a Catholic educational public sphere took shape which was closely connected to international

<sup>16</sup> Mónica Moreno Seco, *Conflicto educativo y secularización en Alicante durante la Segunda República (1931–1936)* (Alicante: Institut de Cultura ‘Juan Gil-Albert’, 1995). Some information on the Catholic educational mobilisation is offered in Bernabé Bartolomé Martínez and Juana Hernández Crespo, ‘La Federación de Amigos de la Enseñanza (FAE) como alternativa pedagógica’, in Julio Ruiz Berrio, ed., *La Educación en la España contemporánea. Cuestiones Históricas* (Madrid: Sociedad Española de Pedagogía, 1985), 254–62.

<sup>17</sup> On the confrontations before the war see Rafael Cruz, *En el nombre del pueblo. República, rebelión y guerra en la España de 1936* (Madrid: Siglo XXI, 2006), 125 f.

<sup>18</sup> Ana Yetano, *La enseñanza religiosa en la España de la restauración* (Barcelona: Anthropos, 1988).

<sup>19</sup> Viñao, *Escuela*, 101–10. The drive towards greater organisational and educational unity did not stop with the Civil War, but continued in the following decades. Another medium of collaboration was the *Anuario de educación y enseñanza católica en España*, published by the FAE since 1934. The yearbook gave an overview of Catholic activities in the field of education, listed Catholic schools by province and brought together representative essays on educational problems and methods.

debates. This homogenisation allows us to discuss Catholic education as a whole and to determine common developments.<sup>20</sup>

If we turn now to educational concepts and practices as such, two main interests that altered education and school life profoundly between 1900 and 1936 can be singled out. On the one hand, the changing demands of the Catholic bourgeoisie as the main ‘customers’ of Catholic education stimulated an opening up of the educational institutes toward the modern industrial world and middle-class lifestyles. On the other hand, the attempts of the Catholic Church to re-Christianise Spanish society left their mark on the schools. Confronted with the spectre of secularisation and in a critical review of their educational endeavours, Catholic educators decided to reinvigorate their teaching methods and practices in order to achieve a deeper religious indoctrination of the students. They demanded the education of active Christians who would lead the apostolic re-conquest of Spain. These two driving forces coexisted in an uneasy relationship. Both had different agendas, but together they created a specific Catholic educational modernity.

#### IV

The expansion of Catholic education was intimately linked to the increasing demand for education made among the Spanish urban middle and upper classes. Wealthy sponsors supported the foundation of Catholic schools through the donation of important amounts of money. Employers, for example, sponsored the creation of schools to obtain a better-instructed workforce. Middle-class parents were also increasingly willing to pay substantial school fees in return for a solid education for their children.<sup>21</sup> Although the religious orders stressed their autonomy in educational matters, this financial dependence on sponsors and fees gave the middle classes an important influence in practice in school affairs.<sup>22</sup> Indeed, the teaching orders operated *de facto* as educational enterprises and so had to compete in a larger educational market. While it is true that in smaller cities competition was limited and single orders often specialised in specific segments of the educational market, in the larger towns at least there developed intense competition between the individual *colegios* for fee-paying students. Catholic journals of the early 1930s were full of advertisements for schools that stressed their superiority over their competitors.<sup>23</sup>

These advertisements also offer insights into the educational values and demands of the Catholic middle classes. It can be argued that the attraction of the Catholic schools for large parts of the Spanish middle classes consisted in the fact that they

<sup>20</sup> In this article I can only briefly mention the important interrelations between the Spanish debates and transnational Catholic and pedagogical discourse.

<sup>21</sup> See, e.g., Manuel Revuelta González, *Los colegios de jesuitas y su tradición educativa (1868–1906)* (Madrid: UPCo, 1998), 170–8.

<sup>22</sup> For a similar situation in England see Gunilla-Friederike Budde, *Auf dem Weg ins Bürgerleben. Kindheit und Erziehung in deutschen und englischen Bürgerfamilien 1840–1914* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1994), 362–5.

<sup>23</sup> A comprehensive collection of advertisements can be found in the *Anuario de educación y enseñanza católica en España 1934/35* and *1935/36*.

offered modern education tempered and controlled by religious moral values. Almost all the schools offered what can be called a programme of ‘controlled modernity’. The training for an active role in modern capitalist society which constituted the predominant interest of most parents was made acceptable by a special emphasis on values and manners.

The self-representation of the schools in the 1930s was decidedly modern. Not only did they stress the state-of-the-art character of their educational facilities, their comfortable buildings and spacious grounds. They also elaborated on their advanced scholarly programme and the modernity of their pedagogical methods. Most schools, like the Colegio de la Asunción Santa Isabel of Madrid, advertised a ‘system of education which responds to the demands of the modern world’ and promised parents ‘instruction broader and more modern than was customary a few years ago’.<sup>24</sup> Nelly’s School of Barcelona took pride not only in its thorough religious education but also in the wide range of new subjects offered and in the employment of ‘the most modern teaching techniques’. Most schools had introduced science laboratories and commercial and business qualifications by the 1930s.

It is true that these developments were far more marked in schools for boys than they were in those for girls, where the educators felt much less need to prepare their students for an active life in modern society.<sup>25</sup> However, advertisements for schools point to a change in attitude towards female education as well. Many girls’ schools explicitly mention the preparation of students for official qualifications as a major goal. Some colleges went even further; the Colegio de Nuestra Señora de Loreto in Barcelona, run by the influential Ursuline order, offered optional classes taught ‘observing the methods of Professor [Maria] Montessori’.<sup>26</sup> Overall, school administrators showed a remarkable ability to adapt to both the new features of bourgeois life-style and new pedagogical fashions of the twentieth century. Even in the difficult times of the early 1930s, when Catholic schools were under strong pressure from liberal and secular governments, most tried to administer a state-of-the-art education.

The advertisements portrayed religious instruction mainly as inculcating moral and decent behaviour and respect for traditional authorities, family, church and state. In the texts, religion was always closely linked to a vocabulary of moral values and order. The above mentioned Colegio de Nuestra Señora de Loreto promised its students an ‘education fundamentally Christian, a firm moral education and instruction according to their social standing’, and the Colegio de San Miguel in Madrid explained that its education ‘was guided towards religion and *patria*’.<sup>27</sup>

The modern image that the schools gave themselves was not mere publicity but was reflected in significant changes in the schools as social institutions which can be

<sup>24</sup> These and the following citations are taken from *Anuario de educación y enseñanza católica en España 1935/36*.

<sup>25</sup> See the intriguing argument in Frances Lannon, ‘The Socio-political Role of the Spanish Church: A Case Study’, *Journal of Contemporary History*, 14 (1979), 193–210. The article is one of the very few modern case studies on a Catholic school in pre-war Spain.

<sup>26</sup> *Anuario de educación y enseñanza católica en España 1935/36*.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*



defined as embourgeoisement. By the time of the advent of the Second Republic a transition was under way from the model of the schools as seminaries towards that of modern British boarding schools.<sup>28</sup> First of all, the living conditions in the schools improved markedly. Reports of unheated, unhealthy buildings, still frequent around the turn of the century, disappeared as most colleges introduced heating and hot water in the decades after 1910.<sup>29</sup> The careful planning of gardens and sports facilities responded to an increased concern of public health experts and parents with the bodily well-being of the children. Hardly a school missed an opportunity in the 1930s to point to the privileged location of school buildings and their spacious grounds, which became an important comparative advantage in the competition for students.<sup>30</sup>

Moreover, the interaction between the schools and urban society increased. The times during the academic year when the students were allowed to leave the school premises slowly expanded. While around the turn of the century students were not allowed to see their parents outside the summer vacations, from 1908 the Jesuit college of San Ignacio de Sarriá in Barcelona allowed students to return home for the Christmas and Easter holidays, too. At the same time the schools relaxed their strict rule of accepting only full-time boarders, and took in more and more day students.<sup>31</sup> The religious orders thus yielded to the widespread demands of parents who wanted their children at home for the night. While before the First World War students felt that with entering school they left behind ‘the world we came from’ – a feeling intensified by the procedure of cutting the hair of new arrivals – by 1935 a 12-year-old in the prestigious Colegio del Pilar in Madrid who hurried to school each morning, and even went home for lunch, would have found the closely supervised atmosphere of the older colleges strange and outdated.<sup>32</sup> Finally, in the 1930s part of the education process itself took place outside the school walls. The schools increasingly incorporated study trips in their schedules. Places of interest were not only holy places but also sites of the modern bourgeois world such as factories and stock exchanges. The trips aimed especially at acquainting the students with the operation of modern commerce and industry. In the 1920s study trips became fashionable to such an extent that observers spoke of a veritable craze. To bring the students ‘into direct contact with reality’ became a new goal for the Catholic educators.<sup>33</sup>

The development which probably most changed everyday school life was, however, the cautious relaxation of the strict regimes controlling the lives and movements of

<sup>28</sup> The English colleges and public schools played a prominent role as reference points in the Catholic educational debate. See, e.g., Enrique Herrera Oria, *Cómo educa Inglaterra* (Madrid: Fax, 1933).

<sup>29</sup> Yetano, *Enseñanza*, 238.

<sup>30</sup> Colegio de Jesús–María de San Gervasio, *Anuario de educación y enseñanza católica en España 1935/36*.

<sup>31</sup> Yetano, *Enseñanza*, 229, 235. See also Revuelta González, *Colegios*, esp. 543 ff.

<sup>32</sup> The description of a typical school day by a 12-year-old was published in *El Pilar. Revista colegial*, 59 (June 1935), 42. A good description of the old model is given in Gaziel (Agustí Calvet i Pascual), *Tots els camins duen a Roma. Història d'un destí (1893–1914)* (Barcelona: Aedos, 1958), 75–8 (repr. in Yetano, *Enseñanza*, 315–18).

<sup>33</sup> A. Martínez de la Nava, ‘Las Excursiones Escolares’, *Anuario de educación y enseñanza católica en España 1935/36*, 81–7.

the students. Originally modelled on monastic regimes, they reminded students at the turn of the century and even Catholic pedagogues in later years of rules of military camps or prisons.<sup>34</sup> Students' movements were rigidly supervised; they were not allowed to walk alone through the buildings and were put under a strict regime of silence.<sup>35</sup> In the 1920s and 1930s this regime was relaxed, allowing more freedom of movement and opening up room for play and leisure which had not previously existed. Altogether, a shift away from collective forms of behaviour and greater recognition of the individual personality of the students took place. While around 1900 the *colegios* tried to suppress everything from individual hairstyles to personal belongings which might express individuality, in later years this suppression of individuality was relaxed. This is most visible in the sleeping arrangements. In the 1930s most students slept in single or double rooms – and thus acquired a limited private space – instead of the large dormitories of the turn-of-the century schools.<sup>36</sup>

All these changes in the schools, which can be defined as an assimilation into the urban bourgeois lifestyle of the world around them, were to some extent the result of pressure on them by middle-class parents to relax disciplinary measures and also to abandon corporal punishment. This pressure was reflected in intense debates over educational practices, and especially the disciplinary regime, in Catholic educational journals from the 1920s. The repeated and lengthy defence of school discipline by Catholic pedagogues serves as an indicator of the extent to which the traditional punishment regime had come under critique. The renowned educator Rufino Blanco felt compelled to remind parents and teachers alike in 1936 that, to achieve a truly complete preparation for life, the school had to teach not only joy but also pain.<sup>37</sup> In similar vein the school journal *El Pilar* in a series of articles in 1935 felt the need to justify its educational methods. It lamented the increasing unwillingness of students to subject themselves to school discipline and the lack of co-operation on the part of the families in enforcing some elemental disciplinary rules. At the same time it tried to dispel what seemed to be a widely held conviction among parents 'that the school had to be an earthly paradise, where everything can be achieved without difficulty and work'.<sup>38</sup> The new challenges of the bourgeois environments were often discussed with reference to the spoiled child (*niño mimado*), who came to represent these challenges and occupied a prominent place in Catholic educational discourse. The teachers saw themselves facing the difficult task of disciplining these children, supposedly brought up in a family environment where the female

<sup>34</sup> Enrique Herrera Oria, 'La crisis de hombres en España', *Atenas*, 22 (15 July 1932). For an overview of the regimes of the Jesuit colleges before 1900 see Revuelta González, *Colegios*, 539–50.

<sup>35</sup> Gaziel, *Tots els camins*, 75 (repr. in Yetano, *Enseñanza*, 315). P. M. Quera, SJ, *La estela de una institución centenaria*, 81–90 (cited in Yetano, *Enseñanza*, 318–25).

<sup>36</sup> Advertisements for the colleges in the 1930s frequently mention single or double rooms as the standard type of lodging.

<sup>37</sup> D. Rufino Blanco, 'Del Album de un curioso', *Hogar Antoniano*, 45 (April 1936).

<sup>38</sup> 'Z', 'El Arte de Educar: El Esfuerzo, Verdadera Palanca de Educación', *El Pilar*, 60 (November 1935).

members especially did everything to make their lives easier, without alienating their parents.<sup>39</sup>

It is important to keep in mind that the developments described here first took root in the elite colleges. In the charity schools for working-class children and in more rural environments a strict disciplinary system seems to have lasted much longer.<sup>40</sup> Moreover, boys seem to have enjoyed earlier and more freedoms than girls. However, despite these qualifications, the trend towards a more individual and liberalised education is clearly visible before the Civil War, especially if one bears in mind the fact that the elite schools served as models for the rest of the Catholic schools and that the debates in influential journals such as *Atenas* were closely followed by a large number of Catholic educators outside the metropolitan centres.

## V

The changing demands of bourgeois parents were an important factor in the transformation of educational practices. However, this was not the only factor. The Church's aim to re-Christianise Spanish society through education was of equal importance. The new concern with child psychology and the appropriation of modern pedagogy were not only defensive responses to outside demands, but also the result of an internal revision of Catholic teaching. Faced with its perceived shortcomings, Catholic educators attempted to achieve a deeper religious understanding among their students.

The embattled position of the Catholic Church in pre-Civil War Spain has repeatedly been described. Although its institutional power was not seriously curtailed until after 1931, the Church saw in the various attempts to secularize Spain a frontal attack against the Christian religion. In its defence the Church created new political pressure groups – starting with the powerful Asociación Católica Nacional de Propagandistas (ACNdeP) in 1909 – and a host of newspapers around the Editorial Católica and its flagship, the national daily *El Debate*.<sup>41</sup> In this battle with secularising forces, Catholics increasingly looked to education as a means of instilling a new religious consciousness in the Spanish population. The schools became the primary missionary organisations in the crusade for a Catholic Spain.<sup>42</sup> Until 1936 the defence of Catholic educational institutions stood at the centre of Catholic political

<sup>39</sup> See e.g., Monseñor Dupanloup, 'Los niños consentidos o mimados', *Atenas*, 20 (15 May 1932).

<sup>40</sup> See Lannon, 'Spanish Church', 199–201. However, even in the social work of the Catholics a change was under way. During the Civil War, the mother superior of an orphanage in Granada proudly pointed out that in her sanctuary the proper Christian names of the children marked beds, lockers and clothes, not mere numbers as used to be the case. 'Santos Marina, Guardería infantil en Granada', *Fotos*, 30 April 1938.

<sup>41</sup> William J. Callahan, *The Catholic Church in Spain, 1875–1998* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2000); Lannon, *Privilege*. For a recent overview see Feliciano Montero, 'La historia de la Iglesia y del catolicismo español en el siglo XX', *Ayer*, 51 (2003), 265–82.

<sup>42</sup> The Catholic perspective is given in 'En torno al Ministro de Instrucción Pública', *Atenas*, 23 (15 Oct. 1932).

mobilisation, and gathered together tens of thousands of the faithful in public rallies and petition movements.

The intensity of the political conflict has led most historians to overlook the important pedagogical debates and innovations which accompanied the political campaigns. During the 1930s, for example, a debate within Spanish Catholicism over a fundamental reform of Catholic instruction reached its peak. The extent to which Catholic education had come under intellectual pressure by the 1930s is illustrated by frequent laments that ‘among certain Catholic educators one can determine a hesitation in writing and talking about the great educational principles of Catholicism . . . They are afraid of being ridiculed . . . and are afraid that their work is not scientific’ – a clear reference to contemporary pedagogical debate outside Catholicism.<sup>43</sup> A growing number of intellectuals now argued that traditional Catholic education was inadequate in terms of achieving the solid religious instruction of children thought necessary to re-Christianise Spain. The importance that Catholic protagonists attached to educational reform is clearly visible in their public statements. In a key, agenda-setting article, the prominent Catholic intellectual Enrique Herrera Oria – elder brother of the famous Propagandist Ángel – proclaimed one of three goals of the new FAE – besides defending the right of Catholics to educate and to foster legislative reform – as being to ‘work for the perfection of pedagogical methods’.<sup>44</sup> It was the explicit aim of the FAE to establish a pedagogic alternative to liberal education and especially to the *Institución Libre de Enseñanza* and its journalistic flagship the *Revista de Pedagogía*. The establishment of the Instituto Pedagógico of the FAE in 1931/2 and of *Atenas* as a scientific review was a conscious attempt to institutionalize a decidedly modern Catholic education able to battle secular pedagogy on its own turf: ‘Against the methods and the modern pedagogy of the ILE, the methods and the equally modern pedagogy of the FAE.’<sup>45</sup> In many ways the educational initiatives have to be understood as a direct response to the challenges posed by the ILE and its allies. Their undeniable success in creating an elite through modern pedagogical approaches whose values would ultimately transform Spanish society both frightened the Catholic establishment and propelled it into action.<sup>46</sup> The competition with secular pedagogy which in 1931 seemed to win the day put new demands on the teaching methods in Catholic schools.

The FAE undeniably invested much time and resources in disseminating new pedagogical knowledge. A group of influential theorists including Rufino Blanco y

<sup>43</sup> María-Díaz Jiménez, ‘Pedagogía Católica’, *Boletín de la Institución Teresiana*, 252 (March 1936).

<sup>44</sup> E. Herrera Oria, ‘Fines de la FAE’, *Anuario de educación y enseñanza católica en España, 1934/35*. The activities of the Herrera brothers is an exemplary illustration of the intimate connections between political and educational reform.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid. A short overview of the activities of the FAE can be found in Bartolomé Martínez and Hernández Crespo, ‘Federación’; Mariano Pérez Galán, *La enseñanza en la Segunda República española* (Madrid: Ed. Cuadernos para el Diálogo, 1975), 283–304.

<sup>46</sup> For the influence of the ILE in Spain see Antonio Molero Pintado, *La Institución Libre de Enseñanza. Un proyecto de reforma pedagógica* (Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 2000); Antonio Jiménez-Landi, *La Institución Libre de Enseñanza y su Ambiente*, Vol. 4, *Periodo de expansión influyente* (Madrid: Editorial Complutense, 1996).

Sánchez, Andrés Manjón, Pedro Poveda and Ramón Ruiz Amado had worked in this area from the first decade of the twentieth century. In articles and books they had tried to articulate a distinctly Catholic contemporary education.<sup>47</sup> Based on this theory, the FAE reached out to Catholic educators through its pedagogical institutions and *Atenas*. Selected teachers participated in advanced study programmes which lasted from a few days to several months, and the Federation frequently organised highly influential conferences of pedagogic study (*semanas de estudios pedagógicos*).<sup>48</sup>

At the root of the heightened interest in new pedagogical approaches lay worrying reports by Catholic educators that even intensive Catholic instruction in the closed world of the boarding schools did not achieve the desired comprehensive religious *formación* of the students, the Christian personality active both in Catholic enterprises and in the defence of the Church against its many enemies.<sup>49</sup> The evidence of a lack of active religiosity even among faithful Catholics stimulated a new critical enquiry into Catholic education, which increasingly seemed deficient. As empirical research showed, it obviously did not succeed in educating the children beyond memorising the catechism and the imitation of religious rituals. Religious feeling in contemporary Spain, Catholic intellectuals agreed in the 1930s, was more a traditional outward habit than an active confession which translated into political action.<sup>50</sup> Catholic journals frequently criticised those faithful who regularly attended religious rituals but did not possess a deeper intellectual knowledge of religion and did not practise Christianity in their everyday life.<sup>51</sup> Especially worrying was the fact that a majority of the male students held themselves apart from religious affairs once they had left school. The remarks of former students who felt they had attended mass more than enough while in school gave a note of urgency to the calls for a renewal of Catholic education.<sup>52</sup>

Faced with the disturbing results of these inquiries into school life, Catholic intellectuals looked to educational methods for an explanation of the obvious failure of Catholic schooling. They started to complain that instruction in the schools was too concerned with outward obedience and did not adequately take into account the psychology of the students. Why, a Catholic educator asked, was it necessary to force students to sit still and silent like sculptures in a church when this would only instil in them boredom and disgust and alienate them from religious practices?<sup>53</sup> To a growing number of Catholic experts, far-reaching reform of educational methods and procedures appeared to be the only possible way of improving the effectiveness of religious education.

<sup>47</sup> See, e.g., Rufino Blanco y Sánchez, *Pedagogía*, 2 vols. (Madrid: Imp. de la 'Revista Archivos', 1912); Ramón Ruiz Amado, *La Educación: Estudio pedagógicos*, 5 vols. (Barcelona: Guinart y Pujolar, 1908–12).

<sup>48</sup> 'Semana de Estudios Pedagógicos', *Anuario de educación y enseñanza católica en España*, 1935/36.

<sup>49</sup> See for a synopsis Herrera Oria, 'La crisis de hombres'.

<sup>50</sup> 'Z', 'La Instrucción Religiosa en los centros de segunda enseñanza', *El Pilar*, 60 (November 1935).

<sup>51</sup> Herrera Oria, 'La crisis de hombres en España'. The same argument had already been made in the 1920s: 'La piedad en la vida del Estudiante', *La vida colegial*, 2 (March 1923).

<sup>52</sup> Jesús Martínez Hernández, 'La Liturgia y los "Scouts" Católicos', *Anuario de educación y enseñanza católica en España*, 1935/36.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

In the 1920s and 1930s a concept of Catholic education took shape that differed markedly from older models that had lost their dominance both in educational debate and in schools. It is worth looking in more detail at some of the differences between older educational traditions and the new approach. First, a new appreciation of scientific and especially psychological knowledge characterised the new Catholic educators. In the early 1930s, most leading Catholic educators agreed that any educational reform had to be based on the knowledge generated by the new psychological and pedagogical sciences. Catholic journals showed a keen interest in debates outside Spain and discussed in depth pedagogical developments in France, Belgium, Britain and Germany. In this process, education came to be seen less as an art based on intuition and experience and more as a social science which required extended knowledge about its objects – the children – and educational methods. A pioneer of the new understanding was the distinguished Jesuit pedagogue Ramón Ruíz Amado, who as early as 1910 proclaimed the necessity of an education based on science (*educación científica*). Against the traditional view that it only takes love for children to be a good teacher, Ruíz Amado argued that just as a physician needs medical knowledge to cure a patient, so an educator requires pedagogical and psychological understanding to succeed in his task.<sup>54</sup> In the 1930s the necessity of a scientific basis for all educational work was widely accepted.

With this growing appreciation of science, a primarily psychological understanding of childhood replaced a primarily religious one. In the dominant Catholic literature of the turn of the century, childhood was mainly described in religious terms. Within this religious discourse, different perspectives coexisted. On the one hand, children were seen as ‘brothers and sisters of angels’ and endowed with an ‘immaculate purity’, leaving the teacher with the complicated task of protecting and preserving the Christ-like innocence of their students from worldly influences as long as possible: ‘Let’s prolong this blessed age [of innocence] until it is no longer possible.’<sup>55</sup> The traditional strict separation of the *colegios* from their social environment owed much to this view. On the other hand, children were addressed as savages and ‘veritable wild beasts’ who had to be converted to Christianity through education. In this view, each child represented a clean sheet and had to be taught to distinguish between good and evil.<sup>56</sup> In both cases, teaching and learning was conceptualised in moral terms, and deviant behaviour could only be explained in terms of ‘bad’ influences. Confession and mutual prayer were consequently often applied as methods for solving educational problems. A primary school teacher, for example, resolved – as she proudly reported – a case of bullying in her class by making the offenders confess

<sup>54</sup> R. Ruiz Amado, ‘La educación religiosa’, *Razón y Fe*, 27 (1910).

<sup>55</sup> ‘El Respeto en la educación del niño’, *La enseñanza católica*, 78 (15 Feb. 1913). The importance of this article is underlined by the fact that it was republished from the journal *Jesús Maestro*. The identification of children with angels is also a constant motif in the work of the prominent Catholic educational reformer Andrés Manjón: *Diario del P. Manjón. 1895–1905* (Madrid: Ed. Católica, 1973).

<sup>56</sup> Monseñor Dupanloup, ‘Los niños consentidos o mimados’, *Atenas*, 20 (15 May 1932); ‘El Respeto en la educación del niño’, *La enseñanza católica*, 78 (15 Feb. 1913).

before an image of Mary.<sup>57</sup> Not surprisingly, the lives of Christ and the saints were the principal inspirational sources for teaching and instruction. In 1930 a member of the *Institución Teresiana*, which taught future woman teachers still recommended to her adult students the *Confessions* of Saint Augustine as the single most important book of educational advice. She pointed in particular to the description of the saint's conversion as a highly useful guideline for educational work in an hostile environment.<sup>58</sup>

In contrast to this primarily moral and religious understanding of education, however, a more psychological–scientific view of childhood slowly emerged. In the first and therefore key article of *Atenas* Mario Franco, headmaster of a Catholic college, asked, ‘Do we understand our children?’<sup>59</sup> His answer was negative. In his opinion teachers and parents were far too often unaware that childhood constituted a special stage in the development of the human psyche which had to be taken seriously if one wanted to avoid educational failures. To know a child, Franco held, it was necessary to study child behaviour with the same patience biologists use in the study of insects. The Jesuit teacher Fernando Palmés even defined education as a psychological exchange between educator and student. For this reason a knowledge of psychology was essential for all educational work. An ‘exact knowledge of the particular mode of being of each student, or, in other words, his individual psychology’ had to guide the actions of teachers. To obtain this knowledge ‘truly scientific experience’ was necessary. Accordingly, Palmés demanded the installation of psychological laboratories in Catholic schools to monitor closely the instructional process and to draw up a ‘perfect psychograph’ of each student. On the basis of this psychological picture, teachers would be able to detect individual talents and plan individual career paths for the students.<sup>60</sup> With the change in outlook on education, the nature of advisory literature changed, too, as scientific observations and research relegated religious books and almanacs to the background. Overall, the new enthusiasm for a psychological view of the child translated into high hopes regarding the improvement of education.

The changing perception of children and education had important repercussions in educational practice. The transformation of the debates on discipline can exemplify this. In a language which did not differ much from older anticlerical accusations, the new Catholic pedagogues of the 1930s started to condemn the ‘military discipline’ and the ‘prison regime’ of the older colleges because they impeded the task of real character formation.<sup>61</sup> The old methods, Herrera Oría explained, brought about a

<sup>57</sup> Elena Rodríguez Pascual, ‘De la vida escolar’, *Boletín de la Institución Teresiana*, 186 (May 1930).

<sup>58</sup> María Díaz Jiménez, ‘San Agustín’, *Boletín de la Institución Teresiana*, 186 (May 1930).

<sup>59</sup> Mario Franco, ‘Comprendemos a nuestros niños?’, *Atenas*, 1 (15 April 1930).

<sup>60</sup> Fernando M. a Palmés, SJ, ‘La organización psicológica de los establecimientos de enseñanza’, *Atenas*, 1 (15 April 1930). Palmés himself had established such a laboratory in the *colegio* San Ignacio de Sarriá in Barcelona. See also the obituary of the college director P. Domingo Lazaro, who similarly undertook extensive ‘psycho-pedological studies’ of the students in his school: ‘Fallamiento de un ilustre Pedagogo: R.P. Domingo Lazaro (y Castro)’, *El Pilar*, 59 (June 1935).

<sup>61</sup> Herrera Oría, ‘La crisis de hombres’.

college life whose order might look admirable from the outside but whose sterile discipline would in the long run alienate students from the Church and religion. In contrast, Herrera now argued for a ‘discipline of liberty’ which respected and responded to the personality of each student. To back up his argument he referred to scientific research which, he claimed, had shown that the introduction of severe disciplinary measures in schools had led to a marked decline in the number of religious vocations. The teachers writing in *El Pilar* voiced similar opinions on introducing new school rules. While they did not reject ‘reasonable’ disciplinary measures, they took pains to distance themselves from a discipline based on ‘blind submission’. Moreover, they stressed that within the new disciplinary regime students still had enough freedom to express their personality.<sup>62</sup>

In a similar way attitudes towards sexual education changed. While an older tradition argued that even the mention of such a delicate subject might harm the innocent souls of the children and prepare the way for sinful behaviour, a newer position discussed the subject in the context of ‘preventive pedagogy’. An active approach now appeared as the best way to confront the ‘crisis of adolescence’. The task of character formation demanded the active moulding of child sensuality.<sup>63</sup>

Even juvenile religiosity now became the subject of psychological–pedagogical debate. Articles in Catholic journals tried to describe the religious imagination of children and discussed the abilities of the students at different ages to absorb and comprehend religious concepts. *Atenas*, for example, opened its pages to the German pedagogue Ernst Grimm, who distinguished different stages of religious consciousness and described infant religiosity as highly influenced by magical elements.<sup>64</sup> Most disquietingly for Catholic educators, he saw religious receptiveness as decreasing rapidly after the age of 11 as more mundane objects such as film stars began to occupy the mind of the students. Sound religious convictions therefore had to be established in early youth.<sup>65</sup> In general, the personality of the students became increasingly important for Catholic educators. This development was not limited to academic discussions but was visible in the schools as well. *El Pilar* argued, for example, that school instruction ‘had to take into account the conditions of each individual, equally in the somatic and psychological aspects as well as the social conditions which surround each student . . . The education of personality is the ambition of every good educator.’<sup>66</sup>

Although traditional methods continued to influence educational practice in many schools, in the 1930s the new concepts began to circulate in a broader educational

<sup>62</sup> ‘X’, ‘Un Pensamiento Cristiana. Nuevo Curso’, *El Pilar*, 60 (November 1935).

<sup>63</sup> Adolfo Ferrière, ‘La psicología del adolescente y la escuela activa en la enseñanza secundaria’, *Avante*, 46 (January–February 1932); Claudio Novaldo, ‘Ecos de Fuera: Educación sexual’, *Avante*, 46 (January–February 1932).

<sup>64</sup> E. Grimm, ‘La adolescencia, la religión y otros valores’, *Atenas*, 22 (15 July 1932).

<sup>65</sup> See as a good example of this argument J. Sergarte, ‘Los Círculos de Estudios en un colegio’, *Anuario de educación y enseñanza católica en España 1935/36*.

<sup>66</sup> ‘X’, ‘El Arte de Educar: El Esfuerzo, Verdadera Palanca de Educación’, *El Pilar*, 59 (June 1935).



milieu of Catholic intellectuals, teachers and parents.<sup>67</sup> Moreover, as most protagonists of educational modernism held important positions as heads or teachers, the debates had an eminently practical dimension and cannot be cast aside as merely academic. The receptiveness to new non-Catholic currents of pedagogical thought and the ensuing reformulation of Catholic pedagogy was facilitated through the possibility of describing and legitimising it as a renewal of Catholic traditions, especially the Jesuit educational schemes of the early modern *colegios mayores*.<sup>68</sup> The Jesuit colleges served in the debates as early models for a kind of instruction that took into account the whole personality of the student.

## VI

A smaller number of Catholic experts and teachers around the progressive educational journal *Avante* integrated themselves almost completely into the mainstream discourse of New Pedagogy. In this journal, founded in 1932, religion played only a minor role.<sup>69</sup> However, the journal represented only a small minority of Catholic educators and was in many ways an exception in terms of Catholic thought. The general discussion on education in Catholic circles rarely lost its strong partisan tinge. Educational modernity here was intimately linked to questions of religiosity and Catholic politics. I want to dwell on this link here in more detail.

The debates over religious instruction in particular reveal the close connection between reforming Catholic education and re-Christianisation. A significant shift in the goals of religious education took it away from training in manners and instruction in moral values – although these remained important educational objectives – to character formation in a deeper sense. After the establishment of the Republic in 1931, attempts to mould active Christians in the schools intensified. This is no coincidence. As mentioned above, Republican legislation severely restricted proselytising in general and religious teaching in particular.<sup>70</sup> Against these severe measures, intensified religious instruction seemed to leading Catholics to offer the best possibility for countering the laicist onslaught.

Religious instruction in the 1930s looked to create active apostles of the Christian faith. The prescription for religious education changed. Older concepts of religious education linked it closely to issues of moral behaviour and the stabilisation of traditional authority. In an open letter to the national government in 1913 the association of Catholic teachers, in a defence of religion as a subject to be taught in state schools, outlined their understanding of religious instruction as

<sup>67</sup> See paradigmatically María de los Dolores de Naverán, ‘Posibilidad de adaptar a las bases insustituibles de la “escuela tradicional” algunas de las innovaciones didácticas de la llamada “educación nueva”’, *Anuario de educación y enseñanza católica en España 1935/36*.

<sup>68</sup> A. Pérez Goyena, ‘Los antiguos Colegios Mayores’, *Razón y Fe*, 82 (1928).

<sup>69</sup> See ‘Editorial’, *Avante. Revista Mensual de Pedagogía*, 46 (January–February 1932).

<sup>70</sup> For a good recent overview on the legislation and state–church conflict during the early 1930s see Julián Casanova, *La iglesia de Franco* (Madrid: Ed. Temas de Hoy, 2001), 23–46; Boyd, *Historia*, 194–210. For the local perspective see Vincent, *Catholicism*; Moreno Seco, *Conflicto*.

the most adequate means of moralising the nation and the best code for hygiene, because it leads to honouring the principle of authority, . . . promotes respect of foreign property, consolidates the bonds between rich and poor, fosters the love of work and in this way contributes to the greatness of the Fatherland.<sup>71</sup>

The same idea of religion education as moral and patriotic instruction led the journal *La Enseñanza Católica* the same year to defend religious education with reference to the Canadian province of Ontario, where the abolition of religion in state schools had allegedly led to higher crime rates.<sup>72</sup>

In the 1930s this older model of religious instruction, based on the catechism, increasingly became the object of criticism. Enrique Herrera Oría, like many others, lamented that religious education, which he considered to be in a 'disastrous state', was primarily concerned with appearances.<sup>73</sup> A fundamental restructuring of the role of religion in schools seemed urgent. Religious education should no longer merely aim at morally unquestionable behaviour and good manners, but should help to create a lay apostolate of convinced Christians. Religion acquired new significance as an important instrument for re-establishing strong personalities in a time characterised by a profound 'crisis of personality'.<sup>74</sup>

To achieve this profound and active religiosity, Catholic intellectuals instigated various changes both within and outside the classroom. First, they encouraged modernisation in the teaching of religion in order to respond better to the personality and interests of the students. In practice, a number of measures were introduced. Teachers were advised to abandon the teaching of a comprehensive syllabus and rote learning, and instead to concentrate on a limited number of essential Christian truths, so that even less gifted students would receive solid religious instruction. Moreover, it became common sense that the subject matter had to be adapted to the intellectual and moral development of the children. Most schools introduced the so called 'cyclical method'. The main religious concepts were to be taught each school term, so that through their repetition the children would consolidate and extend their understanding as they grew older. The Catholic Parents Organisation proposed in 1935 that four circles of religious instruction be established in primary schools. Teachers should start with 'the principal mysteries for salvation, the indispensable nucleus of the commandments' and reach apologetic questions in the final year.<sup>75</sup> In addition to this differentiation of subject matter, the Catholic pedagogues promoted the extension of teaching beyond purely intellectual matters: 'Religious instruction shall not be merely an intellectual enterprise. It has also to encompass religious devotion and moreover religious practices.' The truths of the Christian faith should no longer merely be understood, but also felt.<sup>76</sup> The introduction of daily spiritual

<sup>71</sup> 'Por la Enseñanza Cristiana', *La enseñanza católica*, 93 (9 April 1913).

<sup>72</sup> 'La Religión en la Escuela', *La enseñanza católica*, 136 (15 Nov. 1913).

<sup>73</sup> Herrera Oría, 'La crisis de hombres'.

<sup>74</sup> For a lengthy exposition of this argument see 'X', 'El Arte de Educar'.

<sup>75</sup> 'La Enseñanza Religiosa. Ponencia presentada a la V Asamblea general de la Confederación Católica de Padres de Familia', *Anuario de educación y enseñanza católica en España 1935/36*.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*

and meditative exercises was the main means of achieving the desired ‘profoundly religious mentality’ of the students.<sup>77</sup>

By the 1930s, moreover, the extension of religious education beyond the confines of the classroom and the introduction of new forms of religious instruction outside the proper curriculum were well under way. In 1934 the influential Catholic Parents Organisation, for example, called for an extension beyond the classroom of ‘complementary means of religious instruction of the students’.<sup>78</sup> Originally this had constituted a response to increasingly specialised teaching of most subjects, which had led to a concentration of religious instruction in the classes dedicated to the subject. It was not just in state schools that the teaching of religion had become, as many Catholics lamented, one subject among others. This tendency was, however, furthered by the exclusion of religion from state schools by the Republic.

The extension and intensification of religious education took various forms. An important innovation was the renaissance of spiritual exercises in the schools, a devotional exercise which originated in the counter-reformatory Jesuit colleges. While the exercises had become popular in the Jesuit colleges of the late nineteenth century, from the 1920s they were taken up by other teaching orders and schools.<sup>79</sup> Most educational institutions now reserved special days for spiritual exercises to foster deeper personal religiosity. Headmasters introduced daily time for spiritual exercises and during the school year organised frequent spiritual retreats which were entirely dedicated to the intensification of religious consciousness.<sup>80</sup> In the *colegio* El Pilar of Madrid, three days were reserved each spring for spiritual exercises. Lectures by religious about orientation in life and different career paths alternated with periods of silent meditation and prayers.<sup>81</sup>

Another highly influential attempt to foster active religiosity outside the classroom was the introduction of Marian congregations in the schools.<sup>82</sup> Here again, the Jesuit institutions of the late nineteenth century were pioneers.<sup>83</sup> Usually divided along age lines, the Marian congregations incorporated parts of the student body during their leisure time and pursued religious and social welfare activities. Normally the groups met once a week under the guidance of a teacher or member of the clergy. Although the variety of orders running the schools makes it difficult to give a full account of the extent of the congregations, it is possible to trace their establishment in the important Marianist schools. Here, local initiatives in Madrid,

<sup>77</sup> ‘Z’, ‘La Instrucción Religiosa’.

<sup>78</sup> ‘La Enseñanza Religiosa. Ponencia presentada a la V Asamblea general de la Confederación Católica de Padres de Familia’, *Anuario de educación y enseñanza católica en España 1935/36*.

<sup>79</sup> For the reintroduction of the exercises in late-nineteenth-century Jesuit boarding schools see Revuelta González, *Colegios*, 318–21.

<sup>80</sup> ‘El Colegio de San José, de Valladolid en Curía (Portugal)’, *Anuario de educación y enseñanza católica en España 1935/36*.

<sup>81</sup> Alfonso Guijarro (12 years old), ‘Impresiones de los Ejercicios Espirituales’, *El Pilar*, 59 (June 1935).

<sup>82</sup> For a general assessment of the role of Marian congregations in Catholic life see Mary Vincent, ‘Gender and Morals in Spanish Catholic Youth Culture: A Case Study of the Marian Congregations 1930–1936’, *Gender and History*, 13 (2001), 273–97.

<sup>83</sup> Revuelta González, *Colegios*, 342–47.

San Sebastian and Valladolid merged in October 1921 to establish general rules for the running of the congregations and to promote their introduction in all Marianist schools.<sup>84</sup> At first, religious education was only one element of a broader programme of cultural and intellectual advancement. A school newspaper in 1922 explained that the congregations permitted the students 'to complete their religious and moral education at the same time as they ornament their intelligence with literary and scientific knowledge.'<sup>85</sup> By the 1930s, however, religious education had unmistakably moved to the centre of congregational life. The Colegio de Jesús-María de San Gervasio of Barcelona, for example, wanted its congregations in 1935 'to ignite in the hearts of the girls the flame of zeal and religious spirituality of Christian charity', and Enrique Herrera saw in the Marian congregations an 'excellent means' of forming active Catholics.<sup>86</sup>

To intensify individual religiosity even more, so-called study circles (*círculos de estudios*) were set up in many schools in the 1930s. In the circles a picked elite of the students read religious texts and discussed problems of their faith under the supervision of a priest. Through the mutual exchange of ideas in an intimate and – theoretically – egalitarian environment, the study circles were intended to eliminate religious doubts and further a deep intellectual understanding of Catholicism. In the Nuestra Señora de las Maravillas school in Madrid, fifteen selected students from each class came together once a week in the mid-1930s to discuss a religious topic 'freely, with loyalty and without passions in the search for truth'. First, one of the participants gave an exposition of the topic; a discussion followed. The debates were to support the daily religious discussions in the classes and advance a fuller understanding of religious concepts. The school administration was satisfied with the successes of the circles and tried to incorporate as many students as possible into them.<sup>87</sup>

Not only does the religious education through the congregations and study circles underline the significant change in religious instruction away from pious rituals towards a more intellectual and personal religious education, but the new forms also brought with them a new and potentially non-hierarchical model of religious education. This is especially true for the study circles. It became increasingly clear to the pedagogues that to initiate a more active religiosity it was necessary to create more egalitarian spaces for intellectual exchange on religious questions and to discard hierarchical teaching methods. The descriptions of the study circles stress the importance of the active participation of all the students. And even though the attendance of a 'director' was declared necessary, his role was in theory restricted to that of a final authority and *primus inter pares*.<sup>88</sup>

<sup>84</sup> 'Vida Religiosa: La Congregación', *Vida colegial*, 1 (December 1922).

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>86</sup> 'Colegio de Jesús-María, de San Gervasio, Barcelona', *Anuario de educación y enseñanza católica en España 1935/36*; Herrera Oria, 'La crisis de hombres'.

<sup>87</sup> Sergarte, 'Los Círculos de Estudios'. The calls for the establishment of study circles were legion in the Catholic educational literature of the 1930s.

<sup>88</sup> El Celador Mayor, 'Sobre Círculos de Estudios', *Hogar Antoniano*, 1 (June 1932).

The new reputation of the boy scouts as ‘the great self-teachers, the great *autoeducadores*’ and the setting-up of a Catholic boy-scout movement underscores this new concern for the voluntary and active participation of children in their religious upbringing. The attraction of the Catholic boy-scout movement lay especially in the boys’ openly confessed faith and lived religion. In a time of extreme pressure on the public display of Catholicism, the disciplined boy scouts appeared as a successful way to lead children to an active Catholic life.<sup>89</sup> The scouts represented the new ideal of a Catholic discipline which was not imposed by the outside – and for this reason prone to vanish as soon as the outside pressure disappeared – but which was internalised and based on understanding and insight. To achieve a better identification of the children with Catholicism, the pedagogues were willing to concede to them a certain amount of autonomy.

The transformation of religious education was part of a broader change in the understanding of the role of Catholic schools before the Civil War. They were increasingly incorporated into the political–religious mobilisation of the mass Catholic movement *Acción Católica*, the Spanish branch of Catholic Action. By the mid-1930s a rhetoric of lay apostolate was ubiquitous in the educational literature and in school publications. Typical of the militant political visions connected with a deepened religiosity was the address of the students as ‘crusaders of the twentieth century’ and ‘soldiers of God’.<sup>90</sup> Faced with an openly hostile national government, many leading Catholics wanted the schools to become ‘training grounds for apostles’. They called for the schools to familiarise their students with Catholic politics and campaigns from an early age, and to convey not just a Catholic ambience, but an ‘ambience of Catholic Action’. A student elite was to be educated explicitly for a future career as Catholic propagandists.<sup>91</sup> The example of the Jesuit San José *colegio* shows the extent to which many children were mobilised in the political–religious struggle. San José was originally situated in Valladolid, but it moved to the Portuguese border town of Curía in 1933 after the state ordered the dissolution of the Society of Jesus. Although the college administration continued to stress the high quality of the education it administered, it proclaimed in 1934 that its primary goal was ‘to raise volunteers for the fight for the good’: ‘The college is not satisfied with the virtue of its students, but aspires also . . . to extract from their number as many apostles for the cause of God and the Catholic interests as possible.’<sup>92</sup> The administration of the San José *colegio* knew that disciplinary measures and punishments alone could not persuade the children to become active Catholics. Consequently, it threatened to expel those students who were not motivated by the highest religious motives.

The intensification and politicisation of religious instruction was a dominant development which to a wider or lesser extent encompassed all the educational

<sup>89</sup> For a eulogy of the boy-scout movement see ‘Hispanicus’, ‘Los Exploradores o “Boy-Scouts” en un colegio católico’, *Anuario de educación y enseñanza católica en España 1935/36*.

<sup>90</sup> ‘Un Pensamiento Cristiano’, *El Pilar*, 59 (June 1935).

<sup>91</sup> Enrique Herrera Oria, ‘Una visita a la más célebre “escuela nueva” de Francia’, *Anuario de educación y enseñanza católica en España 1935/36*.

<sup>92</sup> ‘El Colegio de San José’.

activity of the Church in the 1930s. However, it is important also to recognise the limits of this mobilisation of children by the Church. On the one hand, the persistence of older educational traditions set limits on the new religious recruitment. But, on the other hand, the new ideals of Catholic education were in practice highly ambivalent. The concept of limited autonomy in particular posed many questions. It was in no way clear when and how far educators should intervene in the religiosity of children. Usually, autonomy seems to have been brought to an end quickly if essential elements of Catholic doctrine were touched on. Even more important, it is highly unlikely that the scholarly atmosphere and practices of the congregations and study circles really achieved the goal of mobilising the majority of their participants, let alone the student body as a whole. It is true that a vocal group of Catholic students became active in the apostolic work of the Church. The *Juventud Antoniana*, for example, expanded rapidly in 1930s Spain, with a programme of militant Christianity on the basis of a tight organisational structure and limited youth self-government. In their centres, the *Juventud* concentrated on self-perfection and incorporated many of the new educational techniques. Study circles, for example, were a prominent feature of the youth groups. But in both the schools and the youth groups there existed clear limitations to youth mobilisation. Frequent complaints that the mass of Catholic children and youth were apathetic and did not possess 'the spirit and courage to act' show that even in times of extreme political polarisation, most Catholic students could not be persuaded to immerse themselves in religious issues and join the ranks of Catholic Action.<sup>93</sup>

Overall, the intensification of religious training brought about a separation between an elite body of students and the larger mass, who were excluded from the Marian congregations and study circles and for their part showed no interest in joining them. This separation could be justified by the religious congregations as necessary in their endeavour to educate a Christian elite, who later would diffuse religiosity among their peers. But it is also a clear sign of the contradictions of the new Catholic education.<sup>94</sup> Even in most of the Catholic colleges only a minority of students received the intense religious training the Catholic educators thought necessary to create a mass apostolate against the laic state.

The limits of mobilisation were the hidden subject of a broad debate in the educational literature about the shortcomings of educational practices in families. The administration of the *Colegio del Pilar*, for example, frequently lamented the limited educational powers of the schools and heavily criticised parents 'who think they have perfectly fulfilled their duty as Christian parents in sending their children to a Catholic school'.<sup>95</sup> The complaints over *laissez-faire* parents were legion in the 1930s and have to be read as an indicator of the difficulties in uniting the Catholic population behind the large-scale political-religious mobilisation. Not only, as we have seen, were the protagonist of Catholic Action forced to concentrate their endeavours on a select

<sup>93</sup> 'Ante nuestra boda de plata', *Hogar Antoniano*, 46 (May 1936).

<sup>94</sup> For the pedagogic preference of the Catholic Church for elite education see Vincent, 'Gender', 277.

<sup>95</sup> 'Z', 'El Arte de Educar'.

minority of students, but the seemingly lukewarm reception of the missionary drives in many families also prevented the Catholic *levée-en-masse* that many educators dreamt of before 1936.

## VII

A description of Catholic instruction that looks solely at its anti-modern image does not do justice to its complex transformation. Catholic educational modernity was manifold and contradictory. Catholic schools in 1936 differed greatly from those in existence in 1900. I have pointed to a number of developments that together made up a fundamental shift in Catholic education: (i) the dissemination of new psychological and pedagogical knowledge in the Catholic discourse on children which modified or displaced older religious concepts, (ii) the liberalisation of the school regimes and an opening up towards the bourgeois world outside the school; (iii) finally, the introduction of new practices to achieve a more thorough religious education of the children in the context of Catholic mobilisation against secular modernism. Catholic schools stood at the centre of diverging forces. They had to mediate between the concerns and changing lifestyles of Catholic parents and the spiritual and political interests of the Church. It is important to note that both the demands of the parents and the interests of the Church furthered the adoption of modern pedagogical practices. The growing attention paid to the individual child in Spanish middle-class culture made a pedagogy which highlighted the individuality of children appear plausible and attractive. At the same time, for the protagonists of Catholic Action the new pedagogical currents held the promise of winning over the children permanently for the Catholic cause in the dogged battle with secular reform movements. The new methods promised a deeper religious instruction of children and the creation of an active, apostolic religiosity. It was the new concern for the individuality of children that lay at the heart of Catholic modernity in the field of education.

In a wider perspective, a study of Catholic education can deepen our understanding both of educational modernity and the Catholic responses to ‘secularisation’. First, a closer look at Catholic education can advance our understanding of modern education as it emerged after 1900. It is highly misleading simply to identify the ‘new pedagogy’ with liberal democracy and traditional Catholic education with authoritarian rule. Political mobilisation in the name of an aggressive apostleship, a liberalisation of educational practices, a strong collectivist impetus and a new concern for the individual were not mutually exclusive. On the contrary, Catholic pedagogues and teachers understood them as complementary. It is especially noteworthy that religion, rather than being a leftover of tradition, was a prime mover in the change of educational regimes.

Second, the study of Catholic education can shed new light on Catholic politics between the world wars. The case of Spanish Catholicism points to both the power and the inherent limitations of this mobilisation. In allowing for limited individual activity and spiritual equality, the Church offered a dedicated group of the faithful an

attractive model of political organisation and action. But the intensified demands for religious and political dedication at the same time limited the appeal of an involvement in Catholic Action groups for a larger Catholic community. At least, this is what happened in Catholic schools. Overall, the findings suggest a reconsideration of the role of the individual and 'individuality' in Catholic and other social movements with an authoritarian political outlook in the early twentieth century. Beyond a sterile dichotomy of collectivism versus individualism, it seems worthwhile to take a closer look at the different ways of fusion of the two concepts. A look at children and their education offers a privileged way of addressing these larger questions.