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La Escuela Normal de Maestros de Instrucción Primaria

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**La Escuela Normal de Maestros
de Instrucción Primaria, 1865-1905**

JOSE S. ARCILLLA, S.J.

Not as well known, but no less important than the Ateneo Municipal de Manila, was the *Escuela Normal de Maestros de Instrucción Primaria* (Normal School for Primary School Teachers), the second educational institution entrusted to the Jesuits in the Philippines in the second half of the nineteenth century. Two teachers from the Ilocos province had petitioned the government for a raise in their salary and Governor General Manuel Crespo (1854-56), looking beyond their individual plight, decided to reform the entire educational system of the Philippines, and created a *Junta superior de educación primaria* to study how best to improve the schools in the colony. Their instructions were to organize the colonial system of education and determine what to include in the curriculum in order to spread the Spanish language in the Philippines, how many teachers would be needed, and whether it would be feasible to establish a teacher-training institute in the city.

Not surprisingly, the *Junta* procrastinated for five years until on 10 August 1860, Governor Ramon Solano (1860) picked Felipe del Pan to draw up *his* plan. Submitted eleven days later, it urged the creation of a Normal School for teachers, to which would be attached a practical school for teaching to be staffed by the student teachers themselves. The curriculum should emphasize practical knowledge of the useful arts and trades.

Goaded to action, the *Junta* then submitted a second plan,¹ curiously similar to del Pan's and one of whose points was their unanimous vote

This article is a revised version of a paper read at the Tenth IAHA conference at Singapore, 27-31 October 1986.

1. The commission was reorganized and composed of the governor general, the archbishop of Manila, the rector of the University of Santo Tomas, Fray Juan Felipe de Encarnacion, O.A.R., Fr. Pedro Bertran, S.J., D. Felino Gil, D. Cesar Lozana, D. Pablo Ortega y Rey, and D. Felipe del Pan (secretary).

on the compulsory use of Spanish as the medium of instruction in the schools.

With two propositions on his desk, the governor took the most logical (to him) step and sent the thick packet of documents to Fr. Jose Fernandez Cuevas, superior of the newly arrived Jesuits, asking him to submit in writing his observations and suggestions. The Jesuit did and on 20 August 1861, submitted a program of education for the Philippines.

It must have pleased the authorities for, instead of asking the Fathers of the Pious Schools (*Escolapios*), as Cuevas had suggested, or a lay group of teachers, as the Junta had recommended, the Governor called on the Jesuits to implement the Cuevas plan, following the truism that music is best played by its composer.

It was one of the few occasions when Spanish officialdom acted with unaccustomed speed and determination. On 20 December 1863, the Queen signed the charter of the Escuela and the new regulations governing schools and teachers in the Philippines. On 22 July 1864, the royal order for the creation of a Normal School in Manila was signed. The following 18 November, the Superior Government in Manila issued directives to implement the royal will, and four days later, the Manila government agreed to set aside the sum of ₱2,666.66 for the support of five Jesuit priests to teach in the new school. A building was leased and on 29 November the governor general scheduled the inauguration of the Normal School for 23 January 1865, a day chosen to honor the Prince of Asturias, the future Alfonso XII, whose saint's day it was. On 11 January 1865, after a rather trying voyage battered by the northeast monsoon, the Jesuit faculty of the new school arrived in Manila. And on 23 January, as scheduled, the Normal School was solemnly inaugurated in the presence of Manila élite, amid speeches of unconcealed hope. The following day, the first scholars from all over the Philippines were at their desks to begin training as future teachers of their country.

PURPOSE OF EDUCATION

What was the task assigned to the Normal School? In the plan he submitted, Fr. Cuevas noted that schools in the Philippines were notoriously inadequate, offering no opportunities for literary and intellectual growth, or even the religious progress of the child. And yet, he observed, none of the European nations "surpassed the Philippines in the number of people who can read and write. In no

other schools, however, is there such a lack of historical and humanistic training." Pupils scarcely learned to make comparisons or analyze the cause of things. The memory was neglected so that many Filipinos did not know their own name or that of their parents, and could not even identify the days of the week.

Religious instruction was not imparted. The catechism was mechanically memorized "without understanding . . . [without any] similes and comparisons to clarify doubtful points . . . divine and church laws are not explained in detail" This was regrettable, since education was the "cultivation of the moral powers of the child." Something had to be done if the schools were to form "men of principle, forthright, and hard-working in order to complete the work of the Creator"²

What was needed, then, was not sophisticated schools, but something more modest, something suited to the needs of pupils living in the towns and rural areas of the country. It should be neither too narrow nor too superficial, "rather just what is sufficient for the happy and peaceful life of the farmer, the artisan, the soldier, the sailor, etc., as well as what is demanded by those who rightly aspire and prepare themselves for a future career in business or in the higher professions." In other words, Cuevas concluded, the schools should instill the "principles and practices of religion, love of country, respect for authority, love of work, dedication to one's family, an awareness of the importance of social life, and of the dignity of the human person, i.e., true Christian civilization."³

Significantly the Jesuits insisted that the scholars of the Normal School should reside in the school itself. Otherwise, they argued, how would they develop a "morally upright character according to Christian

2. "Plan de Instrucción Primaria por el P. Jose Fernandez Cuevas, S.J., Manila, 20 de Abril de 1861: *Coleccion Pastells*, CX, documento 11: Archivo de la Provincia Tarraconense (San Cugat del Valles, Barcelona);, "Preámbulo al plan de estudios elevado al Superior Gobierno el 27 de Mayo 1866 por la Comisión de Estudios creada por decreto del Superior Gobierno de 6 de Octubre de 1863," *Ibid.*, documento 13. See José S. Arcilla, S.J. "Ateneo de Manila, Problems and Perspectives," *Philippine Studies* 32 (1984):377-98.

3. *Ibid.* In a note sent to the director of the Normal School on 4 December 1866, Governor General Jose de la Gandara (1866-69) wrote: "Conviene por tanto no olvida que una instrucción varia y extensa pero superficial en todo, quita siempre a los que la reciben la aptitud necesaria para las funciones modestas a que estan destinados. Dar demasiada latitud a ciertas materias, empeñarse en explicar cursos completos de fisica, de quimica, de historia natural, de matemáticas, es un lujo tal vez impropio y perjudicial que o bien abruma a entedimientos no preparados para recibirla, o engendra pedantes insufribles, que envanecidos luego con su saber imperfecto salen de una condición que les hubiera ofrecido paz y bienestar, para correr la de otra donde solo encuentra zozobra y miserias." APP, V-14-042.

principles . . . grow in purity and self-discipline expected of a future primary school teacher?" How would they master and "feel at home" in the Spanish language? Experience showed there was a difference between resident students under the constant supervision of their mentors and those who lived outside the school. ⁴

These were the ideals. To translate them into reality, the school offered two years of academic training centered on three main courses of study: Spanish grammar, pedagogy, and the theory and practice of reading and writing. Basic mathematics and *urbanidad*, or good manners and etiquette, were also included in the program of studies.

Spanish was essential. In 1865, the year the school opened, it was not yet required for admission. But after the first graduates had returned and begun to teach, it was a prerequisite for all applicants.⁵ Significantly, one of the members of the Junta who had voted for Spanish later withdrew his vote. Fray Francisco Gainza, O.P., future bishop of Nueva Cáceres (Naga), had second thoughts and was assailed by fears he felt he had to manifest to the committee.

Basically, Gainza was apprehensive lest knowledge of the Spanish language should prove fatal to the Catholic religion in the Philippines. If all the Filipinos knew Spanish, he asked, what would prevent them from reading modern irreligious and perhaps antigovernment writing? And with one common language, chances that the Filipinos would unite in a separatist movement would be increased. "If we spread the knowledge of Spanish," he wrote, "[we] shall be acting as involuntary accomplices in the sowing of anti-Catholic propaganda . . . parch the piety of the people and wither up their Faith." Till then, the various dialects and cultures in the colony had fostered regionalism and sectional rivalries to the advantage of the colonial government, and it had been easy to smother initial antigovernment or separatist tendencies. By "pitting the Cagayan against the Tagalog, the Tagalog against the Pampango, the Pampango against the Ilocano, it has been possible to isolate certain revolutionary fires . . ."⁶

4. *Libro copiador de los oficios y demas escritos remitidos a las autoridades y centros oficiales por el Director de Escuela Normal de Manila*: Archives of the Philippine Province of the Society of Jesus (Loyola House of Studies, Quezon City), V-14-001.

5. The curriculum listed the following subjects: Religion; Morality; Sacred History; Theory and Practice of Reading, of Writing; Spanish; Arithmetic; Principles of Geography; Essentials of the Physical and Natural Sciences; Agriculture; Pedagogy; Vocal and Instrumental Music; Linear and Figurative Design.

6. Cited in Horacio de la Costa, S.J. *Light Cavalry* (Manila: Good Shepherd Press, 1942), p. 55.

Cuevas, of course, had an answer. Allaying fears for the loss of faith and the probability of a rebellion, he emphasized the importance of Spanish precisely as a remedy against the multiplicity of the Philippine dialects. Besides, he pointed out, there was no choice. Royal legislation was clear that the native inhabitants in all the Spanish dominions should be taught the Spanish language. How would ecclesiastical or civil administration be properly carried out? Because of their ignorance of the local idioms, the bishops and high government officials were a step removed from the people and needed interpreters to conduct official business. The solution was one common tongue.

In itself, this debate was not important, but it revealed two distinct attitudes regarding the role of schools in the colony. The first opinion considered the Philippines essentially mission territory where the primary, if not exclusive, task was to spread the Gospel and the least danger to the Catholic Faith should be immediately quashed. That is why, before the reform decree of 1863, hardly any schools existed in the towns and villages except what would be called "catechetical centers." Yet here, besides the elements of the Faith, basic academic skills were also taught. The memory and understanding were trained to learn the prayers and basic points of the Christian doctrine, and not infrequently, the children were taught to read and write their own catechetical lessons.

The other opinion, best expressed by Cuevas, considered academic training a good in itself and a necessary means to develop the colony. In the words of Fr. Francisco X. Baranera, S.J., the first Director of the Normal School, the school was needed to "bring to all points of the Archipelago the light of a genuine and properly understood civilization which consists above all in raising the spirit above the [merely] material or the earthly" Besides solid religious formation, the school should offer "as far as possible instruction in the holy Catholic faith, the national language, and all the basic skills and information necessary for life"⁷

LIFE AT THE NORMAL SCHOOL

Not all of the sixty original scholars approved for training at the Normal School were present during the inauguration on 23 January

7. Francisco X. Baranera, S.J., Speech at the inauguration of Normal School, 23 January 1865: APP, V-14-047, *folio* 3.

1865, but classes were started anyway. The Junta had urged that the school be opened at the "earliest possible time" and they did not want to wait for all the students, a few of whom had been delayed by inadequate means of travel. One of them came from as far as Guam.

To be accepted, a candidate had to be born in the Philippines, at least sixteen years of age, enjoy good health, and be certified as a person of good moral character. In case the candidates were equally qualified, preference would be for boys of "exemplary conduct, and sons of those who have served in some official capacity" in their respective towns.⁸

The plan called for fifty scholars subsidized by the government from local funds, and ten *supernumerarios* or students willing to pay for their schooling. On graduation, the former were obliged to teach for ten years at the schools assigned them by the authorities. If a scholar failed to finish his studies, he had to reimburse his expenses at the school. The *supernumerarios* had to present a certificate of good conduct, pass an entrance examination, and submit a signed statement from their parents or guardians guaranteeing their financial support at the school. Finally, a certain number of day students were also accepted provided they fulfilled the same requirements and conditions.

The academic program, originally planned to last two years, was increased to three in 1869. The Jesuits quickly discovered that their students had the barest preparation before they came to the Normal School, and they had to undergo what we would call today "remedial college preparatory classes." At the end of the third year, those who obtained the highest rating (*sobresaliente*: "Outstanding") were assigned to schools classed as *de ascenso* ("advanced"), while those who obtained a lower rating (*bueno*: "Good") were sent to *de entrada* ("incipient") schools. Those who failed, but passed a second examination could hope to become only *Ayudantes* ("Assistant Teachers") with a lower salary.

Classes were held daily, except Thursdays and certain feast days and holidays during the year. Recess from classes was held during the entire Christmas octave, the three Carnival days before Lent, and the last four days of Holy Week. From mid-April to the end of May when the summer heat drained one and all of their energies (*época de los mayores calores*), the students were allowed to go home for a longer vacation.

The *normalistas* had to be on their toes all the time. Tests were frequent during the year, and the final examinations were solemn

8. Instructions to the provincial governors, 24 November 1864, copy in APP, V-14-004.

occasions when prizes were distributed and to which the public was invited.⁹ The last six months of training were set aside for practice teaching at the *Escuela practica*, a free primary school for poor children attached to the Normal School where the prospective teachers practised some kind of apprenticeship putting into actual practice the theories they had learned in the classrooms. They were supervised and rated by their professors.

The first normalistas who arrived in January 1865 were a mixture of old and young, the oldest being a fifty-two year old hopeful from Cavite. One Andres Lampitoc from Ilocos turned out to be an artist and he was asked later in the year to paint the portrait of Saint Francis Xavier, the school patron saint, which was placed above the main altar on his feast day, 3 December. Lampitoc was also one of the first fourteen who obtained the teacher's diploma in 1867.

Modern students will be dismayed at the almost monastic daily schedule of the normalistas. On waking at five o'clock, the scholars came together at the chapel for common morning prayers, followed by mass and holy communion. Breakfast was followed by a daily round of classes and study hours interrupted by recreation and rest periods in the morning and afternoon. Silence was the rule, except at designated places and times. At the end of the day, there was common spiritual reading and recitation of the Marian rosary. Each month there was the opportunity to go to sacramental confession for which the spiritual director helped to prepare the students with suitable exhortations and prayers.

That the scholars were as normal as any other group of students is evidenced by a complaint filed in 1872 that some cadets of the School of Infantry had been persecuted and insulted by various "*indios*" who turned out to be students of the Normal School. Converging at the "corner and around the military academy, the latter caused disturbances, insulting the cadets and those on duty here." Investigation disclosed that the incident was part of an ongoing rivalry between the students of the Ateneo and the Normal School, and since one of the cadets had a

9. These "solemn distribution of prizes" at the end of the year, unlike our commencement exercises today when the main event is the speech by a guest of honor or commencement speaker, were elaborate stage presentations, at which three-act or five-act dramas were presented. The purpose was to give the public some specimen of the student's accomplishments. It was, therefore, not unusual for the Normal School auditorium to be filled to capacity on these occasions. Apparently, these exercises at the end of the year were less boring than present-day commencement exercises.

brother at the Ateneo, he became the unwilling victim of this juvenile ill-feeling. The Governor General, Rafael Izquierdo, was duly informed and he enjoined the Director of the Normal School to "warn the guilty parties according to the prescriptions" of the school charter for similar misdemeanors.¹⁰

The Jesuits knew that only about a third of the students at the Normal School intended to become teachers. A number of the *supernumerarios* wanted only to learn Spanish and prepare themselves for another career. But those who did become teachers were expected to be

... the most exemplary person in the town where they are assigned ... the most learned, honest, and of the highest dignity; he has to be the natural and felicitous link to unite the religious, political, and military authorities with the citizenry.¹¹

Not all finished their training, some due to ill health, others to their inability to make any academic progress. Several left their teaching assignments for other jobs. This was true especially when foreign commercial houses opened in the Philippines with offers of higher salaries. That these business corporations preferred the graduates of the Normal School who spoke and wrote impeccable Spanish speaks well of the training they received.¹²

Educational psychologists will applaud the "modern" methods at the school. The Jesuits recognized that one of the strongest motivations for an individual is his conscience, awakened and strengthened by an adequate religious formation.¹³ Aware that rules by themselves did not

10. APP, V-14, 029 and 030.

11. *Libro copiador*, document 201.

12. To compare salaries and stipends: a Jesuit missionary in Mindanao received a monthly stipend of P80; an assistant telegraph clerk received a monthly pay of P200; a lieutenant of the *Carabineros* was paid P800 monthly. See the salary scale in Archivo Historico Nacional (Madrid), *Ultramar*, Hacienda, Filipinas, *legajo* 1388, 1.

13. A detailed description of the class activities reads: "Antes de principiar formalmente las clases se dan unos diez minutos de tiempo para que los discipulos se tomen mutuamente las lecciones. Los de mejor disposicion, con el titulo de Instructores, los toman a un grupo de tres o cuatro condiscipulos que tienen fijamente senalados; despues se la toman reciprocamente los Instructores entre si, por el orden de antemano establecido, hasta el primero que le da el Profesor. Dichos Instructores tienen encargo de corregir privadamente las composiciones o ejercicios escritos de los condiscipulos que constituyen su grupo, o de otra manera senalada por el Profesor, deben dirigirles y ayudarles para que todos en particular, segun sus condiciones personales, puedan sacar el mayor provecho de las cosas que en general se ensenan en clase. Y para hacer verdaderamente eficaz la accion de los Instructores ponen estas notas todos los dias a los de su grupo; notas que sirven, ya para leerse en clase al fin de la semana, ya para sacar en concluyendo el mes, un producto total de faltas que, dividido por el numero de clases habidas durante el mes da un cociente que gradúa mentalmente el merito de cada alumno, y quia al Profesor en la calificacion definitiva que les adjudice." *Libro Copiador*, folio 265.

suffice, the Jesuits tried to balance the human desire for honor and profit with a love for learning by offering their students the proper incentives in the form of academic honors and prizes, besides the salutary academic competition fostered in the classroom made famous by Rizal's description of his experience at the Ateneo. This was the reason for the public examinations and public honors given to deserving students at regular intervals during the year. The examination marks also served as one of the norms for the teachers's promotion and increase in salary later.

THE PUBLIC AND THE NORMAL SCHOOL

The first year the school existed was naturally a time of organization. Enrollment continued till July 1865, when the last scholar finally arrived from the provinces. Class manuals had to be chosen, the daily time order fixed, and the students gradually accustomed to an orderly round of prayer, study, classes, rest. For most, if not for all, it was the first time their waking hours were regimented. And were they not housed in the dormitory attached to the school, most of them, accustomed to the placid and slow pace of rural Philippines would have been bewildered by the noise and bustle of the big city.

Fortunately, the school lived up to what had been expected of it, and the Normal School quickly caught the attention of the public. In January 1866, the end of the first school year, the public was pleasantly surprised, wrote an anonymous newspaper reporter, at the confidence and ease with which the students of the Normal School passed the final public examinations in Spanish grammar, arithmetic, geography, calligraphy, religion and urbanity. What is noteworthy, the report continued, was that most of them, coming from remote provinces, had been in the school for part of the year only, but had come abreast of their classmates who had arrived earlier. The following year, the same laudatory press reported how "highly promising" were the results again of the final public examinations. In the "two years of its existence we have begun to see the beneficent results we can expect in the future [from the Normal School]."¹⁴

Soon requests for admission flooded in from the provinces, with promises to defray the necessary expenses. The military, too, became

14. Copies of articles from *El Porvenir Filipino*, 13 January 1866 and 23 December 1866: APP, V-14-014, and V-14-018.

interested, and sent some sergeants and corporals to train as future teachers for the native troops. In July 1867, the third year the Normal School existed, the same anonymous reporter wrote that the fears about the usefulness of the school proved groundless. The teacher was the support of both ecclesiastical and civil authorities in the towns, and there was a growing demand for schools. This same year, five had graduated from the Normal School, with five more expected to finish their training in a few months. There were sixty students (fifty scholars and ten supernumerarios) studying at the Normal School, besides two hundred boys attending the free elementary classes conducted to train the student-teachers. The one big need was a good building.¹⁵

Not surprisingly, the teachers who taught calligraphy at the Normal School were regularly asked to appear before the courts as handwriting experts to testify during hearings on forgeries and other legal documents. At first, the Jesuits were happy to help; but when the requests became too frequent and the work began eating up precious time from their classroom, the Jesuits asked to be excused from that activity. But the courts persisted, until on 16 June 1881, Fr. Juan Ricart, Superior of the Jesuits in the Philippines, sent a lengthy explanation for their refusal.

The Jesuits, he pointed out, refused, not because of any privileges they had, but simply because of canonical sanctions on the clergy who testify *in causa sanguinis*. Those who teach calligraphy naturally become some kind of specialists, but by the same token, this subjected them to a certain kind of *servidumbre* incompatible with their priestly or religious calling. At the same time, since their work did not make them "automatic experts" in detecting forgeries, problems of conscience plagued them whenever they presented their testimonies under oath. Would the honorable president of the Audiencia, then, consider these reasons and cease from calling on the Jesuits in future verification cases? Yes, the president would, and from then on, instead of Jesuits, Normal School graduates were summoned to testify.¹⁶

Because the director of the school was an *ex-officio* member of the Board of Education, he was frequently called upon for decisions on petitions to open new schools, raise teachers' salaries, appoint or transfer teachers from one place to another, or investigate charges laid on allegedly erring teachers.

15. Copy of an article in *El Porvenir Filipino*, 23 July 1867: APP, V-14-021.

16. For example, Francisco Serrano Laktaw, one of the most successful teachers in Manila and author of a well known Spanish-Tagalog Dictionary. He was also suspected of complicity in the rebellion started by Bonifacio in 1896.

For example, Mindoro was notoriously lacking in teachers. By 1881, there were in the province only five licensed teachers who had studied at the Normal School, eight substitute teachers and the rest had no formal training of any kind and were hardly able to read or write, despite all their good will. As their traditional salary was only ₱2 a month, those who had accepted a teaching position had to seek other income to keep body and soul together. This often forced them to absent themselves from classes, for which reason the authorities recommended suspension of erring teachers. But the director of the Normal School, after due investigation, urged doubling their salary, besides granting a "*dotacion para casa*."

Then there was the perennial lack of teachers in the Bicol region. To remedy it, Bishop Francisco Gainza, O.P. suggested that substitute teachers be recognized and paid a monthly salary of ₱12 even if they had no official *titulo* or had not passed the examinations. Otherwise, he warned, there would be schools indeed, but no teachers. They could of course obtain a diploma in Manila, the Bishop added, but that took time. Often, the interested party had no money to pay the fees. And who would want to teach for the measly sum of ₱2 a month? Besides, once appointed, some of the teachers no longer bothered about obtaining the proper titles, while many of those who were willing to teach as substitutes hesitated to take the examinations. It was not always easy for them to travel from a rural area to the city to undergo these tests, and the others, fearing a humiliating disqualification, gave up the idea altogether.¹⁷

Still another typical case in which the director of the Normal School had to intervene was that against a certain Don Mariano Gatmaitan, teacher in Guingua, Bulacan. He had been accused of *abandono y negligencia* by the provincial governor who had found during one of his inspection trips "no signs of progress" among the school children. What had happened? In his defense, Gatmaitan readily admitted that when the governor had come around, the children were not at school because it was summer vacation and classes had been suspended. Second, there was no school building and there were no books, for which reason the children were not attracted to attend classes. It was not the teacher's duty, he emphasized, but the local inspector's to see to the

17. "Informe sobre la reforma propuesta por el Obispo de Nueva Caceres," *Libro copiador*, documento 86, folios 171-73.

daily attendance at school. And, how could he provide the books when he hardly received enough to support himself? The director of the Normal School saw merit in the teacher's plea and recommended that, besides acquittal and reinstatement, the proper school equipment should be provided.

PROBLEMS AND POLICIES

Perhaps the chief drawback in the colonial schools was the extremely low pay of the teachers. An assistant teacher received only ₱4 a month if he taught at a new (*de entrada*) school; ₱6 if at an advanced (*de ascenso*) school; and ₱8 if at a fully ranked school (*de termino*). He could add to his meager salary the fees paid by the pupils who could afford them.

Another problem was the lack of school furniture and teaching materials: desks, rooms, tables, stationery, teaching aids or materials, etc. Is it surprising that when the Americans came at the turn of the century, they were unanimous in their negative assessment of the Philippine schools?

The Jesuits themselves had never been satisfied with the building they occupied. The original plan had been to renovate the old Jesuit novitiate at San Pedro Makati, at the time owned by a private family. But the idea failed to carry the vote, and the government rented a building on Arzobispo Street in the walled city, not too far then from the Ateneo Municipal. In time, the Jesuits had reason to complain, for constant appeals to the owner to have the roof patched up and other necessary repairs made fell on deaf ears. They were helpless to do anything about it, until 1880, when an earthquake rendered the structure unsafe and the school had to be transferred, first, to the Ateneo where makeshift classrooms had to be readied along the corridors; then, to the Jesuit week-end villa and retreat house along the Pasig river in Santa Ana district, about five kilometers eastwards, cooler and cleaner than the city. Finally, with a loan from the government and permission painfully obtained from the Jesuit Superior General in Rome, they were able to construct a new building in the suburb of Ermita. Inaugurated six years later, the Normal School finally found its final home on Padre Faura Street. During the construction, the lumber shipped from Bataan was unloaded on the shore and had to be carted to the construction site. This opened a new path which was subsequently named after Padre Faura.

With the increase in the number of qualified teachers graduating from the Normal School, there was also a corresponding growth in the

number of schools in the islands. But that did not mean improvement in the quality of teaching. In 1886, a Dominican missionary in Cagayan valley wrote:

There are towns where it is little less than impossible to maintain regular school attendance In general, these contribute: the dispersal of the settlements (a primary cause), the parents' laziness, the negligence of the *gobernadorcillos*, the lack of teachers, on occasion the absence of school buildings but always their dilapidated condition, the dearth of books, paper, tables—everything, in short, needed in a school.¹⁸

Nor was it only in the mission areas where education was not well attended to. In Pangasinan, one of the richest provinces of the country, education was

as it used to be 25 years ago [1861]. Not one child can speak Spanish. Most children try to learn to read and write any way they can. If a father wants his child to learn to speak Spanish and the rudiments, he is forced to look for private teachers paid out of his own pocket, or send him to Manila.¹⁹

Here the problem was not the teachers' low pay; rather, it was the disproportion between the number of teachers and their pupils. Despite the law that provided for one teacher for every 80 pupils, there was only one teacher whether the children totalled 1,000 or 250. Furthermore, the parents refused to send their children to school because they had no confidence in the teachers who were "normally young . . . unmarried, strangers to the town, inexperienced, tactless . . . played favorites of the children from the wealthier families . . ."²⁰

These facts, however, should not blind us to the real contribution of the Normal School. By 1889, twenty-five years after its inception, it had trained 1,100 teachers, and 190 assistant teachers for 896 primary schools in the Philippines. A Normal School for female teachers had already been established in Naga, capital of Camarines. When a second was planned for Manila, someone suggested reducing the subsidy for the one in Naga since it had already fulfilled its purpose of preparing female teachers for the Bicol region.

18. Fray Pedro de Nolasco, O.P., *Memoria* (1886): Archivo de la Provincia del Santisimo Rosario (Manila), Manuscript section, "Cagayan," 230-32.

19. Fray Francisco Carrozal, O.P., *Memoria de Pangasinan, 1886*: APSR, Manuscript section, "Pangasinan," 9.

20. *Ibid.*

A plan to open another Normal School in Jaro, Iloilo failed to win enthusiastic support. Compared with the other provinces, Iloilo had been sending more scholars to the Normal School in Manila, but less than three-fourths of those who graduated with a teacher's diploma actually taught. With the economic boom of the province, more than one-fourth chose a higher-paying and less taxing job with the commercial houses. And so, the argument ran, since the teaching career did not attract, Jaro did not need a Normal School. Instead the local seminary could offer the corresponding courses for those willing to teach, provided it was opened to those not planning to enter the priesthood. But since these students would be residing in the seminary, they would have less opportunity to master Spanish to qualify as teachers according to the law. Hence, the director of the Normal School in Manila suggested, a better solution would be to raise the teachers' salaries which often were lower than that of the town scribe. No less important, the director wrote, was the help from the local school board, the inspectors and the *gobernadorcillos* in urging regular attendance at school. And, of course, the government must provide the necessary school buildings with their equipment and pertinent school materials.

Negative criticism of the Normal School and its graduates grew with the years. Because of their perennial shortage of men, the Jesuits kept asking whether it was expedient to continue assigning men there.²¹ More serious was the criticism from certain sectors in Manila and Madrid which the director thought he had to answer.

The Normal School was not perfect, but the statements made about it were clearly exaggerated, he began. Why was there so much hostility to the school? Simply because, in accord with the law, the training it offered was deeply imbued with religious values. Second, certain segments of Philippine society were not satisfied with the teachers who happened to be *hijos del pais, flojos y descuidados* (native-born, weak, careless). As they grew older, their faculties were apt to be impaired, unless they were always challenged. Family and personal concerns interfered with the performance of their tasks. But there were exceptions. In order, then, that each teacher could live up to his responsibilities, the local school authorities should not be remiss in *their*

21. Fr. Francisco Javier Martín Luengo, S.J., local superior of the Surigao mission, urged that the Jesuits should not give up the Normal School, saying, among others, that they should give up the mission rather which had become *parishes* in order to concentrate more men at the school. APP, V-14-017.

duties. So far, the latter have not been cooperating with the teacher and have left him all alone.

Of the average fifty graduates each year, only a small proportion continued as teachers, while the majority sought better paying jobs. What was the situation of the teachers? They taught without classrooms, without books, without stationery, etc. They faced parents opposed to the schooling of their children. Not a few were made to serve as town scribes, or made to work at inferior and humiliating tasks.

As for the chronic ignorance of Spanish among the Filipinos, the director's answer is rather pertinent to those of us today who are concerned about bilingual education. It should occasion no surprise at all, he remarked, and it was unrealistic to expect that only Spanish would be spoken in the Philippines. Even in Spain, the regional idioms had not disappeared, and people continued to speak Basque, Catalan, Castilian, Gallego, etc.

What was the remedy? Very simply, more cooperation and dedication by everyone responsible for the education of the youth. If everyone performed his tasks faithfully, criticism would have no validity and the youth would be better educated.²²

Asked what benefits the Normal School had brought to the Philippines, Fr. Hermenegildo Jacas, S.J., Director, answered towards the end of 1893 that better "relations between the natives and the civil, ecclesiastical, and military authorities" had become noticeable. Trade, industry, commerce, and agriculture had improved, and not only was there greater participation by the "natives" in the scientific and literary professions, but also in the exercise of public authority on the various levels of government.

As if to confirm these signs of growth, new regulations were approved in 1893 for the Normal School newly approved as "*Escuela Normal Superior*."²³ Two levels of instruction were offered, for which two titles were granted: that of "*Maestro de instrucción primaria elemental*," and that of "*Maestro de instrucción primaria superior*." The second title was for those who passed other courses beyond the traditional three-year program and had obtained the highest ratings in the examinations. With this title, too, a new teacher could be immediately

22. "Breve noticias de la Escuela Normal," *Libro copiador*, folios 349-54.

23. "Exposición razonada, sucinta y laudable sobre la elevación de la Escuela Normal a la categoría de Superior, acompañando el Reglamento modificado." *Libro copiador*, folios 459-83.

assigned to a school *de término* of the first and second class, without waiting a number of years before receiving a promotion.

A teacher on the elementary level could also hope for promotion to the superior rank if, after his graduation, he passed a qualifying examination (*reválida*) with the mark of *sobresaliente* which allowed him to pursue further studies in order to obtain the higher title. But if he obtained the lower ratings of *regular* or *bueno* and not the higher *sobresaliente*, he could teach only at a new school (*de entrada*). There were other new rules, like those governing teachers' tenure, or the subjects to be studied and the new textbooks to be used, which we need not discuss here.

Fr. Jacas was finally prevailed upon to allow teachers to serve in their local post offices until the mail service in the Philippines was reorganized towards the end of the century. Till then, it had been the *gobernadorcillo* who distributed the mail. But since he was not paid, he refused to perform the task. Likewise, in 1894, when vaccination was imposed all over the country, it was to the teachers that the government turned for help to explain to the people its advantages. If the parents refused, their unvaccinated children were refused admission to the school.²⁴

Why mention these details? To show the role of the Normal School graduates beyond their teaching responsibilities. They formed the new élite, the leaders, the link, as hinted above, between the authorities and the ordinary families. In almost all cases, the teacher was the only one in town, besides the Spanish or Filipino priest, who spoke, read, and wrote Spanish. By the time of the Bonifacio uprising in August 1896, many of the teachers had emerged as the local leaders and propagandists for a free Philippines. Unfortunately, together with the monied class in Iloilo and other sugar and rice producing provinces, the teachers might have enjoyed some ascendancy and honor among the people, but they did not have political clout. It was still the peninsular who held the reins of government, a factor that explains much of the unrest that simmered just before the outbreak of the separatist war in the last decade of the nineteenth century.²⁵

24. Here is a description of the early method of vaccination: "The doctor comes at sundown and administers the vaccine to five of the boarders, using pus brought in from Europe kept in glass containers. Last Wednesday, he had done the same thing to four others, and he now wanted to take the culture from them to apply to the rest, but he could not do it because it had been negative." *Efemérides de la Escuela Normal desde 1865 a 1885*, entry for 16 July 1884: A-Ta, E-II-c-6.

25. Some of the more famous of these former teachers were Emilio Aguinaldo, Artemio Ricarte, Juan Cailles, Francisco Serrano Laktaw.

THE NORMAL SCHOOL AND THE PHILIPPINE
REVOLUTION

The first excited reaction when the Filipinos took up their bolos and rifles to topple the colonial government of Spain in Manila found a convenient scapegoat in the Jesuits who were branded as having been privy to the separatist plot, if not its prime movers. By educating the Filipinos, it was said, the Jesuits had produced the articulate leadership that spearheaded the uprising.

An old charge, the superior of the Jesuits in the Philippines said, but at the time repeated with acrimony, not by the entire Spanish community, but only by some religious sectors and others who had been skeptical of the purposes of the Normal School. If classes had been handled by other Spanish teachers, the argument ran, the students would have imbibed a deeper love for Spain.

Because the Jesuits, as distinct from the *friars*, were not objects of hatred or anti-Spanish propaganda, one wonders if this anti-Jesuit bias was a result merely of internal ecclesiastical politics or jealousy. Late in November 1896, an article in a Barcelona weekly, *La Semana Catolica*, sarcastically underscored the "influence on the insurrection of the brilliant *Escuela Normal de Maestros*" in Manila. Were it not for the gallant action of Governor General Polavieja, the author continued, "there already will have surfaced several hundreds of teachers heeding the cry for freedom."²⁶

The Jesuits answered the best way they could, by acting to prove they were not *menos Españoles* than the rest of them. Besides, they pointed out, "common sense" would show the fallacy of such talk. Of the Normal School graduates, how many were involved in fighting? Did they rebel because they were teachers? There were, indeed, former Normal School graduates who had taken up arms. How many? On the other hand, how many would have rebelled if there had been no Normal School?

Of 1,813 licensed teachers and 326 assistant teachers who had graduated from the Normal School between 1865 and 1897, about one-half had either died or abandoned the teaching career. Of the 907 teachers and 164 assistant teachers who had received the license, about 70 were dismissed because, not having enlisted themselves in the

26. Pio Pi, S.J. to the Jesuit Superior General, Manila, 30 September 1896: APP, III-6-032; III-6-033; III-6-033-a.

volunteer troops summoned at the start of the rebellion, they were presumed to have joined the underground. But, a number in the far-away rural areas had not even heard of the call for volunteers. Four were not listed in the teachers' official register. One had escaped to Manila from the province to escape persecution by the revolutionaries. Another had received an award from the government for services and personal merits and someone else had rescued a Spanish official's widow from the rebels. So, possibly only thirty-three teachers and thirty assistant teachers could be listed as revolutionaries. Were these, an unknown Jesuit wrote, the "hundreds" of teachers who cooperated in the separatist movement? On the other hand, two teachers in Nasugbu, Batangas had been forced to escape to the government lines because they had been persecuted for their loyalty. A teacher in Amadeo, Cavite was similarly forced to flee to Manila for his own safety. The teacher assigned in Pagsanghan, Laguna had to stay for three days in a boat without food or drink to escape torture from the rebels. A teacher in Carmona, Cavite was wrongly accused of rebellion but he was subsequently rehabilitated and rewarded by the Governor General as well as by the Director of Civil Administration for his loyalty. A student of the Normal School, not yet a licensed teacher, served as the interpreter for the government troops in Bulacan, and another saved the life of an Augustinian priest in Nueva Ecija. Unknown to some historians, a number of teachers in the provinces, for example, Iloilo, sent their contributions to Manila to help in the war effort.²⁷

The polemic eventually died of inanity, but not anti-Jesuit feelings. This is not the place to detail this point. When the Americans came, one of their first priorities was the reopening of the schools. Interviews were held between the Jesuits and the new authorities who wanted the Ateneo and the Normal School to resume classes immediately. But there was now a stumbling block: the separation of Church and State introduced by the new rulers following their interpretation of "freedom of worship." As a Jesuit wrote:

27. Anonymous, "*Datos relativos a los Maestros*," APP, V-14, uncatalogued; letter of gratitude from the Military Authorities of Iloilo thanking the teachers for their contributions, printed in *Magisterio Publico de la Provincia de Iloilo*, March 1897; letter of the teachers of Iloilo remitting their contributions for the war in Luzon, and an acknowledgement of the contributions from the school children of La Paz, Iloilo. APP, V-14, uncatalogued.

If by freedom of worship is understood merely the tolerance of private religious belief, in virtue of which no one can be compelled to profess the Catholic religion, or be persecuted for ceasing to be a Catholic, or professing privately the religion which suits him best, then this freedom of worship has always existed in the Philippines, for no Filipino or foreigner has ever been forced to embrace the Catholic religion. But if by freedom of worship is understood the granting of all religions . . . equal rights to open schools, build churches, form parishes, hold processions and public ceremonies with the Catholic Church, we believe it would not only be an inadvisable, but a lamentable measure for any government which may rule the destinies of the Filipino people.²⁸

The American government, on the advice of the Filipino ruling élite, however, decreed "freedom of worship" for the Filipinos. In the reorganization of the schools, a compromise was reached which allowed teaching religion in the public schools three hours a week after school hours. As for the Jesuits, the new dispensation meant the end of the annual subsidy by which the government had helped them administer the Ateneo and the Normal School from the beginning. Both schools lost their official character, but the Jesuits bravely tried to continue a work they believed important for the future of the country.

By 1902, a Jesuit wrote, the Normal School could accomodate only 750 pupils, and many more had to be refused admission fully two weeks before the school opened. But the end was not far off. Father Pedro Torra, S.J., the Director, issued a circular to announce

the Society of Jesus intends to continue its task in the Philippines of training Christian teachers, even though the Normal School is deprived of its official character and designation by the government. Certainly we do not intend to make a business enterprise of the school; on the contrary, the future is doubtful. We hope only to be able to maintain ourselves in such a way as not to abandon a work which, up to the present, we consider to be most necessary in the Philippines for its moral and religious rehabilitation and also for the preservation of the Catholic Faith.²⁹

When the government opened its own Normal School, the Jesuits tried to continue the Escuela Normal as the College-Seminary of Saint Francis Xavier, offering courses leading to the A.B. degree. It could not continue as before. First, because the government refused to

28. Cited in Horacio de la Costa, *Light Cavalry* (private printing, 1942), 283-84.

29. APP, V-14, uncatalogued; also cited, Horacio de la Costa, *Light Cavalry*, 297-98.

approve its curriculum which included religion. In the second place, about one thousand American teachers for the Philippines had been hired, and even if the Normal School could train teachers for Catholic schools, would there be enough, after the introduction of public schools all over the islands, to employ the Normal School graduates? Besides the lack of men, the Jesuits did not have enough financial resources to administer a teacher-training college. On the other hand, if it offered a full college course, it would be competing with the Ateneo. So, when the Apostolic Delegate arrived and asked the Jesuits to change the Normal School into a seminary to train future priests for the Philippines, the Normal School had to be closed.

The subsequent story of the Escuela Normal is beyond the scope of this article. It had been in existence for a little over thirty-five years, the first and the only teacher-training institute in Spanish Philippines. But in that brief span of time, it had served its purpose and gave the Philippines professionally trained teachers who in their unsung and unappreciated ways were the agents who planted *outside of the cities* the Hispanic and Christian culture that is part of Philippine society today.