

PAX ROMANA-IMCS
Fribourg/Suisse



AI 55/GAL 9

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Directing Committee
Leicester/England
12, 13, 14 August 1955

1. At the outset I must thank you most sincerely for the invaluable help you gave me to see more clearly the causes of some of the difficulties that are facing us and to seek means to overcome them so that we could work for the ideals we have set forth in a more efficient manner.

2. I have already made known to you the replies I received to the questionnaire I sent out immediately after our meeting last February. I shall here try to present to you the results of my own reflexion based to a great extent on the suggestions made by those who replied to my questionnaire. I should warn you that I do not pretend to give you a complete analysis of the difficulties of the Movement since, first of all I do not consider myself yet competent to do so and secondly because I fear such an analysis will not help us very much as far as the purpose of this document is considered. However, I expect that we will receive in the near future an analysis of the situation made by Mr. Ducret after his ten years experience in the General Secretariat. Hence at our meeting we will be able to consider this report in the light of the analysis that he has made.

3. In considering the various points I wish to place before you, I would like to request you not to fear seeking solutions which may be daring. It may be necessary perhaps to modify the statutes, but it is not at this meeting that we can do so. If the statutes have to be modified, before it could be done there is still plenty of time for thought. So please do not fear to speak out what you feel is the best solution even though it may look a little too hardy.

4. To restrict our discussions and make them more useful it would be best to base our deliberations on two principle aims of Pax Romana. They are, as I gathered from the replies I received:

- Fins da Pax*
- a) Pax Romana is the meeting point of all the efforts made the world over to Christianize the University;
 - b) Pax Romana should be a source of aid to the federations in their task of forming an intellectual elite without forgetting ofcourse the need for giving the federation leaders a formation to work on the international level.

We shall now seek whether we have been doing the maximum possible to achieve these aims.

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5. To accomplish these aims it is essential that we work more closely with the federations and prepare our meetings with a view to create an international consciousness and deeper understanding of their role among the participants. We often say that the federations are not interested in Pax Romana. I wonder whether we have not given the federations more reason to say that Pax Romana does not care for them. Instead of asking the federations to be interested in Pax Romana what is necessary is to make Pax Romana more useful to the federations. I should think that at the meetings of the Directing Committee, we should devote more of our time to think of means to aid our federations to fulfil the role that Pax Romana wants them to play, rather than try to spend our time dealing with administrative matters which do not essentially need the consideration of the Directing Committee and which fall better within the competence of the General Secretariate. Our meetings should be the occasion to put our heads

together to consider how far the program accepted at the Interfederal Assembly could be carried out, how far it has helped Pax Romana to fulfil its role, and suggest modifications and make recommendations which will make the rest of the year's work have an impact on the federations.

6. In order to form an intellectual elite and prepare leaders to play their part on an international level we should have many more study weeks and regional meetings than we have now. At a regional meeting there is more occasion to receive a formation since people with more or less the same type of problems meet and the atmosphere is conducive to intensive work. Much more than increasing the number of study weeks and regional meetings, we should attach sufficient importance to their preparation and follow up. How many of our study weeks have been followed by an official document on the work done? The results of these meetings have not been made available to the federations. We cannot all the time say that we do not have money to publish the documents. Either we have to seek more money or we should give up some other less essential work so that we can make our federations profit from all that is done by the Movement. A movement which considers itself to be international and meant for the University milieu has produced practically no document to aid the Christian formation of its members during recent years! Rather than go on accepting new tasks in spite of the limited means at our disposal, we should attempt more to consolidate our work and do the little we can do WELL. If we do not provide the federations with at least the results of our studies and experiments, how could we say that we are helping them to Christianize the University? The University is not Christianized by repeating several times that we are Christianizing the University.

7. It may perhaps be worth considering the holding of an Interfederal Assembly only once in two years and having more regional meetings and study weeks in between. Thus the General Secretariate which is overworked will be saved of the work involved in preparing an Interfederal Assembly every year, and may make use of this time to prepare the documents based on the study weeks and regional meetings. Whether the Interfederal Assembly is held every year or not, I should think that the intellectual and formative aspect of these meetings must be intensified and so planned that very little time will be lost in dealing with administrative matters. The study theme should be prepared with the aid of competent people, perhaps the ICMICA could help us, and well worked out documents should result.

8. To save the time of the Interfederal Assembly for more useful work, it may be useful to separate the items to be considered into two classes and place before the Interfederal Assembly only those points on which a decision of the Assembly is absolutely necessary. The other items should be considered only by the Directing Committee. In asking the Assembly to pronounce on a decision, the president should be able to give precisions and orientate the Assembly towards a decision, instead of leaving the members to discuss indefinitely.

9. The international leaders of Pax Romana, among whom I include the members of the staff, should aid the federations to understand better the ideals of Pax Romana and persuade them to help Pax Romana to fulfil its role. Here the members of the Directing Committee have a very important part to play. They should make use of every occasion to meet the students and convert them to Pax Romana. It is important also, that staff members get more occasions to visit federations, in order to help them to get over their difficulties. I need not add that these visits should be very well planned.

10. Another aspect of our work on which we could profitably spend a few minutes of reflexion is the Journal. I would have liked to use the term publications, but since there is only one publication, the Journal, which reaches the student there would be no justification to use the more general term. Even if the Journal will have to

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appear less frequently we should try to publish articles aimed at helping the students to get a better formation. Since very often what appears in the Journal is no more news when it appears, it may be good to have a smaller **polycopied** sheet to convey the news and make use of the Journal to give the students and intellectuals material for reflexion. One of the objections raised often has been that it is difficult to find authors. If at every difficulty we were to throw up our hands and say desperately that nothing can be done, then I wonder whether Pax Romana would be existing now. The theme to be treated should be planned in advance and competent persons approached sufficiently early to prepare the articles. It may be useful to decide on the themes to be treated during the year already in the beginning of the year so that all the numbers of the Journal published during the year will form an integral whole. By having a publication say every three months the person in charge of the editing will have more time to prepare the number. However, since we have already received subscriptions on the promise that the Journal will appear **ten** times a year for this year we may not be able to reduce the number to four. But unless we take a decision now, every year we will be in the same position and nothing will be done. If we decide either way now, the decision could be carried out from the beginning of next year.

Journal



11. The General Secretariate should be a centre of intellectual and spiritual life. For this purpose it is absolutely necessary that we have a chaplain who will have plenty of time to devote to the work of the General Secretariate. I would even suggest that we consider paying him an honorarium so that he will have no scruples to spend his time for Pax Romana while his colleagues are working - in a way - to gain their bread. A large number of the problems that have faced the Movement and in particular the General Secretariate is due to the lack of a **competent** chaplain who could spend most of his time in the General Secretariate and follow the work very closely.

12. The members of the Directing Committee should be responsible with the aid of the General Secretariate to draw up a plan of action for the ensuing year in order to aid the federations to give their members an integral formation. Meetings should not be arranged just because a meeting must be held, but because it will have an impact on the federations. Being still in touch with the student milieu the D.C. should know better the needs of the students, and how best to satisfy these needs, than the members of the General Secretariate. This will be one of the positive contributions of the Directing Committee. Once this plan is prepared it is up to the General Secretariate to carry it out. Thus the General Secretariate will have a definite plan to follow and will not have to depend on its own competence alone to decide on what should be done and what not.

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13. The recommendations of the Interfederal Assembly and the Directing Committee should be directed more to the individual student rather than to the federation leaders. If a particular project does not interest the individual student, it will be impossible for the leaders to do anything about it. That is why I would recommend to the Interfederal Assembly that it should think about the attitude of the individual members of the federations before taking decisions.

14. I shall now try to consider the difficulties of the Directing Committee. First of all to speak about membership, I would think that what the Movement should ask of its Directing Committee members is competence, without considering whether the member is at the time of his or her election a student. (It should not be long since he left the University and should be still having some sort of contact with students). Moreover the statutes do not require that the Directing Committee members be students. The choice should be made taking into consideration whether they will be able to attend the meetings and whether they will be able to help the federations through the

Movement. Sometimes members have been elected to the Directing Committee in absentia and since **their** election they have never attended a meeting.

15. In nominating candidates for the Directing Committee we should request the federations to see that the person thus nominated collaborates with the Directing Committee and prepares himself for the future role he will have to play. In case candidates fail to collaborate with the Directing Committee, the Directing Committee should be able to recommend to the Interfederal Assembly that such and such a candidature is not acceptable because the candidate has not profited by the occasion given to him to prepare himself for membership in the Directing Committee.

16. The Directing Committee and the General Secretariate should jointly direct the Movement. The Movement will certainly function more efficiently if the General Secretariate and the Directing Committee collaborate more closely. The information sent to the Directing Committee should be more abundant. The circulars should contain matter for reflexion on all the difficulties that the Movement has to face and not just a narration of what has been done. Replies should come to the circulars, not because a reply has been asked for, but because a problem has been posed and the member feels it his responsibility to send his comments to the General Secretariate to aid the staff to overcome some of the difficulties facing them.

17. The General Secretariate should prepare written reports on the various points that are to be discussed at the meetings and make them available to the members in advance. These reports should be the analytical presentation of a particular point on the agenda helping the members to see the different aspects and come prepared to take decisions. It should by no means be just another document prepared to fulfil in form and not in spirit the desires of the members.

18. In the interest of the better functioning of the Directing Committee it may be good to envisage the possibility of appointing a fulltime president. Thus he will be able to accomplish his role as described in the statutes better and also aid the preparation of the meetings and direct meetings with more competence. In case it is not possible to have a fulltime President it is necessary that the President visit the General Secretariate more frequently so that it will be easier for him to be au courant with the developments. The General Secretariate should show entire confidence in him and aid him to make his contribution to the Movement. In case the President lives too far away he or she could be replaced by the Vice-President for this task.

19. The President should be in very close touch with the General Secretariate and should be so well informed about the Movement that he will be able to collaborate positively with the General Secretariate in all work. For the meetings, once the agenda is prepared, the President should have had all the information in hand, so that he would have an idea as to what decisions should be taken and thus direct the debates better.

20. If the suggestions made in the previous two paragraphs are accepted, the President or the person who is deputed by him will be able to keep the rest of the members of the Directing Committee au courant about everything.

21. If the new plan of work is accepted for the Directing Committee it is advisable to have more frequent meetings of the Directing Committee, to review at short intervals the work accomplished. Perhaps the membership of the Directing Committee could be reduced so that more frequent meetings will not necessarily mean more expenditure. If in order to serve the Movement better it is necessary to have more frequent meetings of the Directing Committee, and in order to have such meetings the membership should be reduced, I see no difficulty to do so.

22. However, whether the Directing Committee membership is reduced or not, it should be the Directing Committee that is responsible for preparing plans for study thomes, finding out what thome will be most useful for the federations, suggesting a publication on a particular thome and seeking authors for articles. One may raise the objection that the Directing Committee members do not know the needs of the federations and so could not do this work. That is exactly why I started by speaking about the need for a better collaboration between the Directing Committee and the General Secretariate and a more abundant exchange of information so that they will know everything about the needs of the federations. A lot of work that could be done by the Directing Committee members is being done by the General Secretariate now, because pleading overwork the needed information is not passed on to the members of the Directing Committee.

23. In case the membership of the Directing Committee is reduced, a larger meeting of candidates, directors of subsecretariates etc, could be called once or twice a year to discuss the general needs of the Movement and accept or even prepare the plan for the succeeding year.

24. Speaking about the plan for the futuro, I would like to insist once again on the absolute need for having a well worked-out plan of work for Pax Romana-IMCS. If we could plan our work in a general way, say for the next five years, and in a more precise manner for the next year it will be much easier for a new Directing Committee to take up and continue the work even though the Directing Committee may not be prepared sufficiently well. Now due to the lack of such an organic plan each one comes with his ideas and does not know how to make the Movement profit by his ideas. Further more well thought-out plan will prevent sporadic action which is not followed up.

25. Any plan that is drawn up should be centred on the federations and should be directed towards aiding the federations. This programme should be established with a very realistic picture of the finances and not just depending on Providence. I do not deny that often we will have to trust in Providence and go ahead with our work. But that trust should be more for extra work that can be accomplished. We should decide upon a few essential things that should be done on the basis of the finances we have. Thus we will not have anything to complain about in planning and carrying out our work on these essential items. The extra work then can be done as and according to the finances available. That is why in considering the plan that will be presented to you I would request you to bear in mind the limited finances we have. Thus the General Secretariate will know what it has to do at any cost and what it has to do only if extra money is forthcoming.

26. For this the members should have a clearer understanding of the finances. I personally do not see why between the General Secretariate and Directing Committee there should be any secrecy as regards finances. At the meeting last February a small committee was formed to consider the question of finances. I hope that there will be again such a commission which will be able to present a detailed picture of the finances to the Directing Committee.

27. Before concluding, I would like to say just a word on the question of continuity. One way to maintain continuity is to have candidates collaborating with the members and another way is to have half the members reelected every year. In practice that is what happens now, and I think we should try to ensure a better collaboration with the candidates and perhaps improve our own work according to the lines I have suggested. I would like to make another suggestion; that the new Directing Committee should try to maintain contact with the outgoing members of the Directing Committee.



28. Our meetings with other organisations as well as staff visits to other organisations or federations should be followed by written reports which will be circulated among the members of the Directing Committee.

29. In concluding I would request the members and candidates to complete this report with their suggestions. I believe that the tasks I attribute to the Directing Committee members are within their possibilities and with good will and a little effort a better collaboration should be possible. Though I attach equal importance to all that I have said in this report, to facilitate any discussion I would suggest that the following points must be considered very specially. Some of them need a decision from the Directing Committee and some others need to be approved by the Directing Committee to be presented as recommendations to the Interfederal Assembly.

i. Preparation for study weeks and regional meetings and publication of the results (Para 6)

ii. Preparation of the Journal (Para 10)

iii. Chaplain (Para 11)

iv. Circulars and preparation of meetings (Para 16 & 17)

v. Role of the President (Para 18 & 19)

vi. Reducing the membership of the Directing Committee. (Para 21)

vii. Directing Committee's responsibility for preparing study themes (Para 22)

viii. Preparation of a long range plan of work (Para 24)

ix. Holding of Interfederal Assembly only once in two years (Para 7)

x. Recommendation to the Interfederal Assembly regarding choice of candidates (Para 15)

xi. Commission on finances (Para 26)

Joseph Kuriacose