

## C. F. S. MOVEMENT IN HOLLAND

### PART II

Under the direction of the local committees of the K.F.A. film circles have been started. Very soon meetings were held in which authorised speakers explained the meaning of the film problem, and demonstrated that a film circle must be a nucleus of local activity in the sphere of Catholic Film Action. The members of such a circle form a body-guard of workers in the great action for good films. They contribute energetically and in various ways to the realisation of the aim of *Vigilanti Cura*, and this not only by study and practical film labour, but also by participation in the propaganda of K.F.A. They are the people on whom K.F.A. can rely in the most difficult hours.

The film circle in Bois-le-Duc has already achieved much that is important. It has become active in the three most important parts of our task: study, propagation, and practical film work. Soon after its commencement this Film Circle held meetings, at which the problem of good films was treated in conformance with the Encyclical and short films were shown and discussed. It showed to the outside world very clearly its propagational character, when the local department of K.F.A. began its offensive at the beginning of June, 1937.

After the faithful had heard *en masse* of the inauguration of the world-film-action through a film-Sunday, about seven parochial meetings were held. At these meetings the film *The Eternal Dream* was shown, and at the same time the assembly heard an explanation of the essence and aim of the K.F.A.

The principal members of the Film Circle appeared as speakers and arrested the attention of the masses to the work of the K.F.A., through innumerable articles in the local Press, by home-visiting and other stimulating activities. In the domain of practical film labour also the film circle of Bois-le-Duc has turned to action. For this pur-

pose a labour group was formed, which tackles the making of films. By this example may it be understood more generally how a film circle can be an important factor in the building up of the K.F.A. work.

In connection with the production of films, week-ends are arranged. The problem of Dutch Catholic film production is a question of expert training and technical outfit. Co-operation and collection of the scattered efforts under supervision and with the assistance of leading authorities must create the sphere necessary for the successful development of all possibilities. To discuss ways and means these week-ends will prove very useful. They are not meant to be of a purely speculative character. Men acquainted with the practical sides of the subject must guide the discussions to practical results in co-operation with the K.F.A.

The individual experiments ought to a certain degree to be centralised, not to hamper individual freedom but to increase our strength. Those that are more advanced need appliances: the studio, technical equipment, etc., and others need the assistance of their more experienced colleagues.

This is the conception of these week-ends: not theory only, but anticipated practice, a platform of speculation as a step towards actual work.

A satisfactory coalition of the Catholic censoring bodies has been achieved under the auspices of the 'Central Bureau' of K.F.A.: The old 'K.F.C.,' which tested films on their 'permissibility' only, was amalgamated with 'Kasco,' which judged the films also on their artistic and educational value for different ages and groups. The executive committee of this new censoring organisation consists of three members each of K.F.C. and Kasco and works under the guidance of the Directors of K.F.A.

A meeting of the editors and managers of the Catholic daily papers with the Right Rev. President of K.F.A. also put an end to the regrettable dissensions about the com-

mendableness of certain films in their several film reviews. The great willingness of the Catholic Press to co-operate with K.F.A. promises much good for a successful campaign for clean films.

From September 1st, 1938, the results of the Catholic Film Censoring are published in the official magazine, *Katholiek Film Front*, and are also obtainable on separate lists, which may be put up in clubs, church porches, etc.

To the general public the activity of the K.F.A. has shown itself best in its propaganda. We could write a volume about all the work, mostly done *con amore*, without any compensation, and by hundreds of people.

The Directors of K.F.A. have appointed a national committee to direct the propaganda. This committee started its work by erecting local sections which represent the K.F.A. in all places of importance. Here we must utter a word of praise with regard to these local sections, which often had to struggle against almost incredible difficulties in order to make this new and modern apostolate take firm root.

Every city and town has its own life, characteristics, eccentricities, and prejudices, which can only be tactfully dealt with by those well acquainted with local circumstances. The Directors have left to the local sections as great an independence as possible, and yet the co-operation between local sections and central direction leaves nothing to be desired. Everywhere a great interest has been taken in the 'Catholic Film Action.' As far as possible the action was conducted parochially, starting with the so-called Film Sunday on which a specially trained priest delivered sermons on the encyclical *Vigilanti Cura* and on *Work for the Good Film*.

By means of a house-to-house call by propagandists the parishioners were asked to enroll themselves as members of the K.F.A. In this way tens of thousands have already been enlisted to patronise the good films and avoid the bad ones. The necessary measures were taken to prevent this

enlisting degenerating into a mass movement without soul or backbone. Before everything else the K.F.A. desires to change the mentality towards the films.

People ought to learn to consider the film as a gift from God, as an invention of the human mind by means of which, as in the case of all real art, great influence for good may be exercised. For this reason the members of the K.F.A. must be convinced supporters of the good films. This is to be attained in two ways: (a) by asking our fellow Catholics to promise in writing to attend no other films but those classified as permissible by K.F.A., (b) by a yearly contribution, according to individual means, towards the defraying of the high expenses of the general campaign. As the K.F.A. must be a mass movement, everyone must be given the opportunity of enrolling himself and of fixing his own contribution. Experience has shown that we were not mistaken in the mentality of our fellow Catholics. The general motto was: 'Become a member of the K.F.A. and contribute at least three guilders (about one-third of the pound at the present rate) per year.' Each subscriber receives twice a month the official organ, *Katholiek Film Front*, free. To this call a generous response followed. Very many spontaneously pay a higher contribution. Thousands of less well-to-do people support the K.F.A. by smaller yearly contributions. Repeatedly, we receive subscriptions of 6d. with the remark, 'From an unemployed, who can do no more.' As in many other things, the K.F.A. rests on the confidence placed by the Catholic people in its leaders. In the same way in which the Dutch Catholics by mutual co-operation have built up a Catholic Party, a Catholic Press, and a Catholic Broadcasting Corporation, so with united efforts they will found a Catholic Film Production and Distribution. The so-called Film Sundays were usually effective precursors of the propaganda, and, if properly prepared, great successes. It appeared clearly that the fame of the K.F.A. had run ahead of the propaganda. When the first difficult steps in

this domain were taken, many disappointments had to be faced. In The Hague and Rotterdam, for instance, the method of procedure was that in all the churches on the same day sermons should be preached on the subject 'Catholic Film Action,' following on which existing propaganda clubs were to make a house-to-house call. Such a wholesale action, without sufficient preparation, was bound to end in disappointment. The number of subscribers did not correspond to the great effort made. Amsterdam, on the contrary, was divided into five districts, in which sermons by specially trained preachers were delivered and where in co-operation with the General Catholic Propaganda Club a house-to-house call was made. Since then the Capital has proved to be one of the best sections of the K.F.A. In The Hague and Rotterdam the propaganda later on made up its arrears by film-evenings in club rooms, etc. It invariably appeared that good results had not been attained without great effort, and that success was obviously due to a more capable local committee and to indefatigable activity. The best example of this is Breda. In the beginning all possible unforeseen circumstances hampered the work. The capable and energetic committee, however, persevered and after almost complete failure ventured with due preparation upon a new propaganda scheme. Breda is now ahead of all local sections.

In this connection grateful thanks must be expressed for the help received from the *Grail*, from many clubs of lay apostles and from the 'St. Josefgezellenvereniging' (Kolping Brothers), etc. An important factor in the propaganda has been and will be still more in the future, the wholesale support given by the directors of religious and social unions. The central bureau of the K.F.A. has at its disposal the periodicals of the Third Orders of St. Francis and of St. Dominic, of the Holy Family, the Sodalities of Mary, etc., to spread the principles of Catholic Film Action. In the coming winter rich fruits will be gathered from what has been sown there.

Film action means in practice, and in the long run, giving the public a good film. A modest but energetic effort was made by the Board of Directors in tackling the problem of the distribution of the film: first of all, an endeavour was made to unite all the efforts already made in this field. For if a distribution of films on Catholic principles in a small country is to have any chance of success, it is necessary that this distribution should be made from one centre.

When it appeared that it was impossible to unite all personal interests into one commercial group the Central Bureau of the K.F.A. found a few wealthy Catholics willing to finance a new limited company which hopes to cope with the growing demands for suitable films by the numerous Catholic unions, boarding schools, clubs, etc., and at the same time to provide for the propaganda film-evenings of the K.F.A. and other large organisations. An office for the leasing of films will try from time to time to introduce high standard films of special importance and to let them to cinemas as was done recently with the film '*Sacred Bonds*.' In this way in co-operation with a travelling cinema it can do much useful work.

The Central Bureau of the K.F.A. has merely taken the initiative and leaves the new company to develop independently, because we are dealing here with a purely commercial enterprise, and the K.F.A., according to its Statutes, as a purely idealistic institution, must keep itself aloof from all money business. Of course, the K.F.A. watches over the moral integrity of the activity of this company and special clauses have been inserted to this end in its Statutes. Moreover, there are in the Netherlands about a thousand Catholic proprietors and directors of halls in which films are shown. Under the auspices of the K.F.A. efforts are being made to unite these into an association after the example of Belgium, so that the common need for good films may produce a satisfactory demand.

The Bureau is directed by a committee. A delegate of the Directors of the K.F.A. acts as its president, and a priest

(a professor of the Catholic University), who is the President of the K.F.A. section that examines films on their suitability, acts as its spiritual adviser. The I.B. keeps close contact with the Censors' Department, and with the editorial staff of the magazine *Katholiek Film Front*: two editors of the *K.F.F.* are members of the Committee, and another acts as its managing secretary. The Managing Director of the Central Office of the K.F.A., Mr. L. Weterings, attends its meetings as an observer.

In this way I.B. has every co-operation at its disposal. Its address is the same as that of the Central Bureau of the K.F.A., Nieuwstraat 24, Bois-le-Duc. Any association desiring information about films, film programmes for its meetings, etc., may apply to the K.F.A., and private persons wishing for information about one or other detail of the K.F.A. or about particular events in the film-world, will receive every attention. It is the intention of the Bureau to set up a Library and a collection of cuttings, photographs, etc., and to become a source of information about this wide and complicated subject of films.

The I.B. will also have the keeping of the 'Registers of Examinations' regarding suitability, quality, and value of films. This means that Associations, Youth Organisations, Boarding Schools, etc., which are faced with the task of composing a film-programme, will in future be able to obtain information about films which are not only allowable for their special audiences, but which also have a certain degree of artistic and educational value. The Censoring Committee has already done a good deal of work. This work requires time, steady perseverance, and, especially, constant vigilance. The percentage of films which may be labelled with an assurance of all-round suitability is not particularly large. The I.B. will sponsor decent films and thus promote the aim of the K.F.A. in a very practical way. It will also note the demand for, and encourage, the importing and making of such films.

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