

THE ADVENTURES OF A STATELESS PRINCE: FRANCIS XAVIER OF BOURBON PARMA¹

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SUMMARY: Sixty years ago the slogan “King Xavier” appeared on walls all over Spain. The graffiti referred to Prince Xavier of Bourbon Parma, Carlist Claimant to the throne. Few people knew much about the elderly prince. This study helps to fill the void. Xavier was a son of the last ruling Duke of Parma, Robert I. He lived in France and was related to many royal families. The Bourbon Parmas were cosmopolitan and had property in various countries. For almost a century after Italian unification their nationality or citizenship was unclear.

Sources in six languages used for this work inform a number of major topics: the prince’s discrete participation in high-level diplomacy in both World Wars, in the conspiracy that led to the Spanish Civil War, in the French Resistance during the Second World War, and his captivity in Nazi concentration camps. Some of the sources reveal the odyssey of 135 important prisoners, including Xavier, from seventeen countries who were extracted from the camps a few weeks before the surrender of the Third Reich and taken by force to an isolated place in the Dolomite Mountains. Another topic the sources highlight is the Bourbon Parma prince’s great love of France. His religious piety, channeled through the orders of St. Benedict and Holy Sepulcher, appears often in the texts.

KEY WORDS: International diplomacy – Conspiracy – Carlism – Resistance – Dachau

1 I would like to thank Dr. Michael B. Ewbank, my brother-in-law, for reading a draft of this study and giving me good advice and my friend Catherine Caten and her husband Julius Caten, of Richardson, Texas, for translating from German a section of the book by Isa Vermehren.

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LAS AVENTURAS DE UN PRÍNCIPE APÁTRIDA: FRANCISCO JAVIER DE BORBÓN PARMA

RESUMEN: Hace sesenta años había pintadas por toda España con el eslogan “Rey Javier”. Se refería al Príncipe Francisco Javier de Borbón Parma, Reclamante carlista al trono. Pocos sabían quién era el príncipe anciano. Este estudio ayuda a llenar ese vacío.

Javier era hijo del último duque reinante de Parma, Roberto I. Vivía en Francia y estaba emparentado con muchas casas reales. Los Borbón Parma eran cosmopolitas y tenían propiedades en países distintos. Durante casi un siglo después de la unificación italiana no tenían una nacionalidad clara.

Las fuentes en seis idiomas usadas para este trabajo informan sobre cuatro temas principales: la participación discreta de Don Javier en diplomacia de alto nivel en las dos Guerras Mundiales, en la conspiración carlista antes de la Guerra Civil Española, en la Resistencia francesa durante la Segunda Guerra Mundial y su cautiverio en campos de concentración nazis. Algunas fuentes revelan la odisea de 135 figuras notables de 17 países, incluyendo Javier, que fueron sacadas de las prisiones unas semanas antes de la rendición del Tercer Reich y llevadas a la fuerza a un lugar aislado en las Montañas Dolomitas. Otro tema que las fuentes ilustran es el afrancesamiento profundo de este príncipe nacido en Italia. Su piedad religiosa, canalizada en la Orden de San Benedicto y en la del Santo Sepulcro, aparece frecuentemente en los textos.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Diplomacia internacional – Conspiración – Carlismo – Resistencia – Dachau

THE PRINCE AND HIS WORLD

On September 13, 1938 a stateless prince who lived in central France wrote to King Leopold III of the Belgians (1934-1951) offering his services in the armed forces.² European countries were positioning themselves for what would be the Second World War. The multi-lingual prince reported for duty in the spring of 1940 after the Phoney War. The fifty-two-year-old veteran was assigned to the same unit in which he had spent part of the First World War. In 1940 he served in the combat for Belgium as an artillery officer on the general staff of the army's Fourth Division.

² Xavier of Bourbon-Parma, diary entry on Sept. 13, 1938, in María Teresa de BORBÓN PARMA, Josep Carles CLEMENTE, and Joaquín CUBERO SÁNCHEZ, *Don Javier: Una vida al servicio de la libertad*. Prologue by S.A.R. Don Carlos Hugo de Borbón Parma. (Barcelona: Plaza & Janés, SA, 1997), 369. The authors/editors do not indicate the original language of the diary. Xavier was a first cousin of King Leopold's mother, Queen Consort Elizabeth of Wittelsbach. She was a Bavarian Princess and both were grandchildren of King Miguel I of Portugal (1828-1834). In subsequent notes Xavier is XBP.

The middle-aged prince who volunteered to fight against the Third Reich and the Nationalist Socialist German Workers' Party was born Francesco Saverio di Borbone (1889-1977).³ He was a member of the Bourbon Parma family, a cadet branch of the Spanish royal dynasty. Xavier was one of the many sons of the last ruler of the Duchy of Parma.⁴ He had lived in France since he was in his teens and was known there as François Xavier de Bourbon Parme. The cosmopolitan prince from Italy had also been active in Spanish public affairs. He followed a family tradition that dated back generations. Since 1936 he had shouldered the burden of being the standard bearer of Carlism, Spain's legitimist, Catholic, and traditionalist political movement that began in 1833. Spaniards called him Francisco Javier de Borbón Parma, or simply, Don Javier.

The international prince was born in Tuscany, near the old Duchy of Parma. His family still owned lovely mansions and considerable land in that part of the Italian Peninsula. When he was a boy the Bourbon Parmas tended to spend half of each year at the large Villa Borbone delle Pianore, located in Lucca near Camaiore, between the Apuan Alps and the Versilia Coast. The red and gray palace where Xavier was born has an impressive double-staircase on the neo-Renaissance facade and is still surrounded by palm trees and by sequoias that had been imported from afar. Pianore housed Gobelins tapestries with historic French royal scenes and a collection of Italian old masters.⁵ When Xavier was growing up he and other siblings went to boarding school in Austria and did not spend much time in Italy. The Bourbon Parmas tended to reside during spring and summer in Austria, where they had a fine eighteenth-century *schloss* called Schwarzau. The large mansion south of Vienna wraps around two courtyards. Robert, the former ruler, had Parma's ducal escutcheon, featuring Bourbon lilies, sculpted on the pediment above the main door. Xavier's father, the son of a French Bourbon princess, hired several tutors to teach French language and culture to the children during the summers. He wanted them to

3 XBP awaits a full-fledged biography, although approximately a dozen books have been published about him, mainly by his children and associates. I looked at seven and used four.

4 XBP's father was Duke Robert I of Parma (1854-1859). He ascended the throne at the age of six. Robert's French mother, Marie Thérèse of Bourbon, granddaughter of King Charles X (1824-1830) and sister of the Claimant Henri V, Count Chambord, was the regent for him for five years, until the Italian movement for unification swept the Duchy of Parma off the map. The best history of the Parma branch of the Bourbon dynasty is Juan BALANSÓ, *La familia rival. La historia silenciada de los Borbones que reinaron en Parma y disputaron el trono a Juan Carlos de España* (Barcelona: Ediciones Planeta, 1994). This study has been translated into Italian and French. Chaps. 13 and 14 are about XBP. For good photographs see Gabriele PRASCHL-BICHER, *Das Familienalbum von Kaiser Karl und Kaiserin Zita* (Vienna: Ueberreuter, 1996.)

5 Many of the paintings were stolen in the Second World War; over the decades some reappeared. The recent discovery of three Renaissance works from Pianore was reported widely in the press on April 18 and 19, 2016. Pianore had been inherited by XBP's brother Felice or Felix.

know about their roots as descendants of Kings of France and to be proud of their French heritage.

The Bourbon Parmas were related to other royal families who also had stately homes near Vienna: the ruling Habsburgs, the exiled Bourbons of France, the proscribed Bourbons of Spain, and the banished Braganzas of Portugal. Other relatives they saw at great family reunions were the reigning Savoys of Italy, Saxe-Coburg and Gothas of Belgium, Nassau-Weilburgs of Luxembourg, and Wittelsbachs of Bavaria. Xavier's kinfolk also included the dethroned Bourbons of the Two Sicilies and numerous German royal and princely families, such as the Lowenstein and Thurn und Taxis. The marriages of Xavier's siblings expanded this royal family network even more. One brother, Renato or René, wed a granddaughter of Christian IX of Denmark (1863-1906).

In the 1980s Theo Aronson, the prolific South African royal historian, described the Bourbon Parmas as "Europe's most illustrious non-reigning royal family."⁶ The nationality of these cosmopolitan princes and princesses was a complex matter. Xavier's father, the Duke of Parma, was born in a country that ceased to exist in the mid-nineteenth century when he was a boy. The Duchy of Parma was absorbed into what evolved into the Kingdom of Italy, but Robert did not become an Italian citizen. Xavier's mother, Maria Antónia of Braganza, was the daughter of a King of Portugal who had been banished from the land.⁷ She was born in the Grand Duchy of Baden-Württemberg and raised in the German Empire. By law she could not set foot in Portugal. At times, friendly rulers, such as Francis Joseph of Austria-Hungary,⁸ offered the Bourbon Parmas some sort of extra-territorial status. After the fall of the Habsburg monarchy many members of the family got around on courtesy passports issued by the Sovereign Order of Malta. A few are rumored to have been given travel documents from the Principality of Monaco. Lack of specific citizenship was an issue for some of Robert's sons during the First and Second World Wars. Xavier was actually declared stateless three times by French law courts between 1925 and 1932.⁹ Most of Robert's grandchildren would have the nationality of their non-Bourbon Parma parent.

Xavier went to excellent boarding schools. At Stella Matutina, run by the Society of Jesus in Feldkirch (Voralberg), on the Austrian border of Switzerland and Liechtenstein, the student body was very international. Latin was spoken

⁶ Theo ARONSON, *Crowns in Conflict: The Triumph and Tragedy of European Monarchy, 1910-1918* (Manchester, New Hampshire: Salem House, 1988), 192.

⁷ Miguel I.

⁸ Francis Joseph (1848-1916), Emperor of Austria, King of Hungary, King of Bohemia.

⁹ Manuel de SANTA CRUZ [pseudonym], *Apuntes y documentos para la historia del tradicionalismo español, 1939-1966* (33 vols., Madrid, 1979-1993), vol. 8 (1946), 132-133. Also, see Franz de BURGOS, "Domaine de Chambord: Histoire d'une spoliation," *Vexilla Galliae* website. Posted Feb. 12, 2016. Accessed Feb. 2018.

at table; life was spartan; the academic level was high; and gymnastics and sports were required. Favorite activities were swimming and canoeing in good weather, ice skating and tobogganing in the winter, and soccer at all times of the year.¹⁰ When Xavier and his brother Sixte were students in Austria their father sent them twice, along with a tutor, to spend a few weeks in France. In 1898 and 1899 they visited Paris to see the sites, especially the ones associated with the monarchy and their ancestors who had ruled France over the centuries. They also went to the Vendée to learn about the royalist uprising there against the French Revolution. The brothers spent some time in Château Chambord (Loir-et-Cher), the jewel of the Loire Valley's castles and stately homes. Their father had inherited it from his uncle Count Chambord. The boys were enchanted and sent numerous enthusiastic postcards and letters to their family.¹¹ These two trips began an enduring love affair with France. The siblings opted for the French version of their names. Over the years Xavier would pray at many Masses for the souls of Bourbons killed in the French Revolution, would speak at gatherings to commemorate the uprising in the Vendée, and would publish numerous short pieces on French royal topics. The prince would name his oldest son Hugues to honor Hugh Capet, the tenth-century founder of France's royal dynasty.

Xavier joined his older brother Sixte in the French capital to go to college. They shared an apartment with a former tutor on Rue Férou, a quiet street just north of the lovely Luxembourg Gardens. When the Bourbon Parmas were university students in Paris, the aging Sarah Bernhardt still held her own in the theater, Pablo Picasso and the Cubist movement were revolutionizing the visual arts with multiple perspective, and Sergei Diaghilev's Ballets Russes, with music composed by Igor Stravinsky, led the performing arts in new directions. Cycling on the Champs Elysées and promenading in the Bois de Boulogne were fashionable. Ladies carried pretty parasols. The two Bourbon Parma princes, who were elegant young men-about-town, went to class wearing top hats. They were occasionally mentioned in the society pages of the press as guests at soirées in grand Parisian *hotels particuliers* where they waltzed or danced the foxtrot beneath frescoed ceilings and glittering chandeliers.

The Bourbon Parma brothers were studious. Xavier is reputed to have earned degrees in both international diplomacy and agricultural engineering in

10 Alois KOCH, S.J., "Playing and Sport at the Jesuit College 'Stella Matutina' in Feldkirch," in W. Schwank, et al., *Begegnung Schriftenreihe zur Geschichte der Beziehung zwischen Christentum und Sport* (Aachen, or Aix-le-Chapelle, 2003), 13-35. The English text is a translation of the original study in German. Both are available online. Accessed in July 2018.

11 Philippe AMIGUET, *La vie de Prince Sixte de Bourbon*. Preface by M. Le Maréchal [Hubert] Lyautey (Paris: Les Éditions de France, 1934), 45-46. Amiguet was a Swiss friend of Sixte who received help from XBP in writing the biography shortly after Sixte's death.

1914 at the same time as Sixte received a doctorate in jurisprudence at the University of Paris. During their student days the Francophile brothers focused on the French monarchy. For his dissertation Sixte researched the Treaty of Utrecht. This major agreement in 1713 at the end of the Spanish War of Succession confirmed the expansion of the French Bourbon dynasty to Spain, changed the Spanish Law of Succession, and established the new one as part of international legislation. In the prince's interdisciplinary study of jurisprudence, history, and political thought he concluded that Spanish Bourbons, throughout the vicissitudes of history, continue to be French. Sixte defended his dissertation on May 26, 1914.¹² A few months earlier Xavier had founded the *Mémorial de France à Saint-Denys* to ensure that a Mass would be said every year on the dates of King Louis XVI and Queen Marie Antoinette's historic deaths.¹³

Prince Xavier loved the outdoors, and enjoyed hiking, skiing, hunting, and cycling. Indoor pastimes included playing the piano and painting in watercolors. Xavier and Sixte went on a number of grand tours in the crumbling Ottoman Empire to visit Greece, Turkey, the Holy Land, Egypt, and other areas bordering the eastern Mediterranean. They also traveled to Mesopotamia or Iraq. In those early days of the twentieth century, before relatively comfortable mass tourism, travel to out-of-the-way places mentioned in the Bible and in classical Greek texts tended to involve writing to different governments for permits, and possibly for protection from marauders, organizing a small convoy of horses to ride and pack animals to carry gear, as well as engaging a considerable support system of people to help. Sixte liked to record their travels in writing and publish some of his essays; Xavier painted. The younger prince was happy portraying the ruins of ancient Troy.¹⁴

PORTUGAL

In his youth Xavier of Bourbon Parma had some dramatic adventures. He was involved, with other members of his family, in a series of royalist¹⁵ armed expeditions aimed at overthrowing the new anti-Catholic Portuguese republic. In less than sixteen years (1910-1926) Portugal's First Republic would have nine

12 The dissertation was published as Prince Sixte de BOURBON DE PARME. *Le traité d'Utrecht et les Lois fondamentales du Royaume* (Paris: Édouard Champion, 1914). There have been a number of reprints. My copy of the book is a facsimile reprint of the original made in London by FB&c Ltd., 2018. AMIGUET, *op. cit.*, chap. 3, summarizes the prince's study.

13 The webpage *Mémorial de France à Saint-Denys* still acknowledges XBP as the founder. Accessed in April 2018.

14 AMIGUET, *op. cit.*, 61.

15 The monarchists were a mixture of supporters of the recently deposed Manuel II (1908-1910) and, mainly, of King Miguel I's son, the legitimist Claimant Miguel II, who was born in exile in 1853. Each Braganza represented a different kind of monarchical system.

presidents, thirty-eight prime ministers, and forty-five administrations. Political instability and factionalism prevented the government from implementing sound policies to tackle the country's many problems and from controlling labor unrest and civic disorder. Persecutions and confiscations, both official and as a result of mob violence, were prevalent. One of the main goals of Portuguese republicans was the secularization of the country. Anti-Catholic measures began in October of 1910, five days after the monarchy was abolished. The decree in question banished all the members of male and female religious orders and confiscated their private, communal, property. Within a year and a half all the bishops in the country had been forced into exile.¹⁶

The paramilitary expeditions against the new Portuguese regime were launched from the Spanish province of Orense, in Galicia. The rebels received some help from Carlists in the area.¹⁷ The incursions were part of a broad Portuguese conspiracy, and the raids were intended to be the signal for uprisings throughout Portugal. The counter-revolutionaries were led by Henrique Paiva Couceiro, who was known as the Paladin of Monarchy. Paiva Couceiro was a hero of Portugal's colonial wars, a former governor of Angola, a popular author, and a political figure with a flair for the dramatic. The expeditions he led centered on Chaves (Vila Real), a strategic town near the Spanish border with a magnificent Roman bridge spanning the Tâmega River. Neither expedition was successful. Only a few conspirators scattered around the country rose up as expected. Both times the monarchists had to retreat to Spain after a few days.¹⁸

When Xavier's extended family gathered in Austria at *Schloss* Schwarzau in the fall of 1911 for the wedding of his sister Zita to Archduke Charles, second in line to the Habsburg imperial throne, news of the first fiasco in Portugal had already reached them. However, the day before the wedding Xavier's relatives were delighted to welcome him home from his adventures and to hear his first-hand account of the Portuguese expedition.¹⁹

In 1911 and 1912 Xavier, a grandson of King Miguel I of Portugal, helped his older kinfolk transport and smuggle weapons through various countries for the Portuguese rebels. The Braganzas received aid from Carlists along the way. One was an aristocratic family that had lived for decades a few miles north

16 One elderly bishop who was too sick to travel remained.

17 In 1964 a Carlist participant in both raids, the poet Luis Rodríguez Fernández, published a short article about the ventures. He used the pseudonym O Fidalgo de Paradela. The Galician writer emphasized the movements of war matériel and the capture of several caches by the Spanish police. SANTA CRUZ, *op. cit.*, vol. 4 (1964), 194-196, reproduces the text.

18 Miguel DIAS SANTOS, *A Contra-revolução na I República, 1910-1919* (n. pl., Imprensa de Universidade de Coimbra, 2010) gives a nice overview of both these little-known expeditions, although XBP is not mentioned.

19 Gordon BROOK-SHEPHERD, *The Last Empress: The Life and Times of Zita of Austria-Hungary, 1892-1989* (London: Harper-Collins, 1991), 20.

of the Pyrenees Mountains at Saint-Jean-de Luz (Pyrénées Atlantiques) and had considerable experience in arms trafficking throughout western Europe. Tirso de Olazábal, a Spanish politician, and his kin were experts at smuggling weapons and ammunition into the Iberian Peninsula for monarchist uprisings. Another was the Orbe family, whose leadership in Carlism dated back to the fall of 1833. Xavier and one of his Braganza aunts²⁰ stayed for a few days in 1912 in the Spanish Basque Country at the home of José María de Orbe, fifth Marquis Valde-Espina. Located at Astigarraga (Guipúzcoa), in the hills overlooking San Sebastián, the Carlist grandee's manor house, named Murguía, was a good place to store weapons. The guns for Portuguese royalists were kept in the cellar in large earthenware jars.²¹

THE FIRST WORLD WAR

At the outbreak of the First World War the international family with a multifaceted identity split. Three brothers served in the Austrian army and fought for the Central Powers; others supported the Entente or Allies. Xavier and Sixte tried to enlist in the French forces, but were rejected. The authorities in Paris upheld a nineteenth-century law that prohibited members of former ruling dynasties of France from joining the French armed forces.²² While the Bourbon Parmas tried to enlist elsewhere in the fall of 1914, they worked for a month in the French Red Cross as stretcher-bearers. They served at the Aubervilliers rail station on the north side of Paris carrying wounded soldiers who were transported from the front. The princes had to quit the French Red Cross in October when it was brought under military jurisdiction. The multilingual brothers had offered their services as translators to the British, but received a negative answer from the War Office in London on October 20. Xavier's diary, written in French, reflects his growing frustration over the course of four months and a half.²³ After these rebuffs, the brothers finally used royal connections to get

20 The Infanta was Adelgundes de Jesus, widowed Countess of Bardi. She sold some valuable paintings to raise cash to buy weapons for the monarchists.

21 SANTA CRUZ, *op. cit.*, vol. 14 (1952), 119-120, gives the text of the letter from XBP to Ignacio de Orbe, the sixth Marquis Valde-Espina, dated at Besson, Feb. 12, 1952 and written originally in French. XBP mentions his stay at the house in 1912.

22 Since their legal residence was Château de Chambord, the brothers went to the closest recruitment office, in Blois (Lois-et-Cher), where they were politely rejected after consultation with the War Ministry in Paris. See XBP's, diary entries on Sept. 3-4, 1914, in AMIGUET, *op. cit.*, 84-85, and see *Austria's Peace Offer, 1916-1917*. Edited by G[eorges Pinet] de MANTEYER. Introduction by Sixte de Bourbon (London: Constable and Company, 1921), 4-5. The book has long sections of summaries of events and position papers written by Sixte. Manteyer, a historian, librarian, and archivist, was a friend of the prince. He was in close contact with Sixte and XBP during the First World War.

23 XBP's diary from July 22 until the end of Nov., 1914, AMIGUET, *op. cit.*, 78-92.

into the Belgian army.²⁴ In early November, when they were on their way to enlist, they were in a car accident. Both men were thrown from the vehicle, and Sixte was injured badly. After he received treatment for several weeks at Jeanne d'Arc Hospital in Calais (Pas-de-Calais), Xavier took his older brother to Camaiore, in Lucca, to convalesce for many months at the family's Villa delle Pianore.²⁵ In March of 1915, during their time in Italy, the brothers went to Rome and visited Benedict XV (1914-1922), who was immersed in relief work and had already published his first important text calling for peace.²⁶

The Bourbon Parmas finally reported for duty in August of 1915 at De Panne (West Flanders), the Belgian town next to the French border where King Albert I (1909-1934) had his headquarters. The two siblings spent close to four years, off and on, in various field artillery regiments. They were together most of the time. After a few weeks assisting medics, Xavier and Sixte were trained to be staff officers. Their main occupation was as artillery observers. They identified targets and, hence, were frequently in dangerous places without cover, such as on rooftops or up in trees. At first the Bourbon Parmas were in the Belgian army's Fifth Division, commanded by General Louis Ruquoy. They were posted a good part of the time at the Ypres Salient (on the outskirts of Ypres, West Flanders) in units that supported British and Canadian forces. Like so many other soldiers, they were bitter cold and got used to rain, mud, and trenches. They were introduced to chemical warfare. As a neutral country, Belgium collaborated with the Allies along its borders, but its leaders were reticent to participate in offensive campaigns in other lands. The Belgian forces were relatively inactive for long periods. At their request, Xavier and Sixte were seconded to Allied units where there was more action. They participated in important events along the French Front. In 1916 these episodes included the longest engagement in the war, the Battle of Verdun (Grand Est), and the bloodiest confrontation, the Battle of The Somme (Somme and Pas-de-Calais). On May 21, 1916, President Raymond Poincaré (1913-1920) awarded both Bourbon Parmas the French Croix de Guerre, or War Cross, for bravery. The brothers were particularly happy to receive the acknowledgement since they had been rejected by the French army. The irony of Bourbon princes being honored formally by the French Republic was certainly not lost on them. A delighted Sixte wrote to a friend the same evening saying the day was "without parallel in the annals of our House."²⁷

24 The brothers appealed to the Queen Consort of Belgium, their first cousin Elizabeth of Bavaria.

25 For the accident and convalescence, see XBP in AMIGUET, *op. cit.*, 90, and MANTEYER, *op. cit.*, 5-6. Neither text indicates if the driver and other passenger were hurt.

26 MANTEYER, *op. cit.*, 10. Benedict XV's encyclical in question was *Ad beatissimi Apostolorum* (To Our Venerable Brethren), and was dated Nov. 1, 1914.

27 *Ibid.*, 13-14. The long passage from the letter to Manteyer, written in French, is in English translation.

Toward the end of 1916 Xavier and Sixte's regimental commander, Colonel Constant Moraine, was promoted and transferred to the headquarters of the Fourth Division, located on the coast of the North Sea at the village of Wulpen (West Flanders). This division was commanded by General Édouard Michel du Faing d'Aigremont. Moraine took the princes with him. They remained in Belgium's Fourth Division as artillery officers until the end of the war. However, they spent considerable time deployed elsewhere, on leave, or in military hospitals. In late May and early June of 1918 the Bourbon Parmas participated in the Third Battle of Chemin des Dames (Aisne). The Allied troops in this engagement included American soldiers. In the fall, as the Great War was coming to a close, the Fourth Division was among the troops that advanced into Belgium. They regained territory from the German occupiers slowly, fighting every inch of the way. Xavier and Sixte participated in this five-week campaign. The combatants stopped at Ghent (East Flanders), where the world-wide influenza pandemic wrecked havoc. In October and November thousands of people died in Belgium in the second, and most lethal, wave of the epidemic. Both princes were hospitalized for months with the Spanish flu. In the aftermath of the war, in the spring of 1919, the Belgian Army of Occupation on the Rhine was composed of the Fourth and Fifth Divisions, which operated in tandem with the larger armies of occupation of the Allied countries. Prince Xavier completed his active duty in North Rhine-Westphalia. His fluency in French, German, and English facilitated his work liaising between the Belgians in Krefeld and the British in Cologne.²⁸ Toward the end of the Great War he and his brother were awarded several medals. On July 28, 1919, a month before they were discharged, they were promoted to captains.²⁹

THE SIXTUS AFFAIR

Xavier and Sixte are remembered for a famous incident during the Great War named after the older of the two. King Albert was happy to give them a furlough from the Belgian army to act as liaisons in international diplomacy. They were gone for months. The Sixtus Affair was one of the unsuccessful attempts during the conflict to negotiate peace between Austria-Hungary and some of the Allied Powers. Sixte had made known his views on possible terms for an equitable peace, and throughout 1916 the princes met with various members of the French government.³⁰ More than one suggested Xavier's older brother

²⁸ XBP's military service is summarized in MANTEYER, *op. cit.*, mainly on 11, 13-14, and in AMIGUET, *op. cit.*, 92-97 and 133-135.

²⁹ MANTEYER, *op. cit.*, 356, reproduces the text of Sixte's citation, and says XBP's is identical.

³⁰ Sixte published several articles and wrote private position papers that he gave to a number of French politicians.

could act as go-between. They thought Sixte was ideally suited because he was an officer in the Belgian Army and his sister Zita's husband had become heir to the Austrian Imperial throne after the murder of Archduke Franz Ferdinand at Sarajevo (Bosnia, in today's Croatia). Over the course of many months there were preliminary conversations, but matters only got under way upon the death of Emperor Francis Joseph. A few weeks after Zita's husband ascended the imperial throne, in November of 1916, he also reached out to Sixte.³¹ The confidential communications between Austria, France, England, and at the end, Italy took place against a backdrop of changing ministries in different governments, the ebb and flow of war, Revolution in Russia, and America's entry in the conflict in April of 1917. The talks also unfolded in spite of the German high command's confidence that the Central Powers would be victorious. Emperor Charles and Empress Zita visited the German Kaiser, William II (1888-1918),³² and his wife in the hope of convincing him of the need for peace as soon as possible. They had lunch at German military headquarters in Bad Homberg (Hochtaunuskreis), Hesse, the spa town of Belle Époque popularity also known for its many old half-timbered houses.³³ The Kaiser was intrigued by the idea, his chancellor was lukewarm, and his most influential generals were opposed.³⁴ Thus, the talks continued without the Germans.

Xavier accompanied Sixte every step of the way during this attempt at conflict resolution on a grand scale. The Bourbon Parmas took numerous cloak-and-dagger trips through various countries. They met four or five times in Paris at Elysée Palace with President Raymond Poincaré of France, who was very enthusiastic, once in London at Buckingham Palace with George V of the United Kingdom (1910-1936), who was interested, several times with Charles near Vienna at the Laxenbourg imperial complex, as well as with ministers in various governments, and royal aides. They received a favorable response from the British Prime Minister, David Lloyd George, who wanted to see Austria separated from Germany. The talks and correspondence were hopeful at first, but gradually wound down. Hence, Sixte and Xavier rejoined the Fourth Division in the Belgian Army toward the end of June, 1917.

The discreet negotiations that had come to naught were revealed to the public in April of 1918 and caused a crisis. The protagonists were extremely

31 Xavier's brother-in-law was Emperor Charles I of Austria, King Charles IV of Hungary and King Charles III of Bohemia (1915-1918).

32 Technically William was Emperor of Germany and King of Prussia.

33 In spite of wartime austerity elsewhere, the German Emperor and his wife, Augusta Victoria, honored their guests by serving salmon and pheasants for lunch. Jake SMITH, "Kaiser Wilhelm II Hosts Emperor Carl of Austria," *Jake Smith's Royal Menus* website includes a photograph of an ornate menu card. Accessed in June 2018.

34 The chancellor was Theobald von Bethmaron-Hollweg; the generals were Eric von Ludendorff and Paul von Hindenburg.

upset. Almost everyone involved had their reputations tarnished, especially the well-intentioned Austrian Emperor.³⁵ There was an international uproar over the possible terms for peace that had been discussed, confidential letters and then disclaimers were published, rumors of a German plot to take over Austria swirled around Charles as well as threats of treason in high circles. A minister in his government had a nervous breakdown and resigned, the thirty-one-year-old Emperor suffered a mild heart attack, and the Bourbon Parmas received death warnings.³⁶

In 1919, at the end of their service in the Belgian army, King Albert bestowed the country's highest honor on the two Bourbon Parma brothers, the Grand Cordon with Palm of the Order of Leopold.³⁷ As the years went by, Charles came to be known as the Peace Emperor. In September of 1992 the Bourbon Parmas entered American popular culture. Over eleven million viewers saw them appear in "Austria, March 1917," the seventh episode of an award-winning television series entitled *The Young Indiana Jones Chronicles*. In the film, the princes, using their own names, are undercover Belgian officers, wearing trench coats and fedoras, who help the protagonist reach the Emperor in a bid for peace.³⁸ A comic book with the same title was published that year. And, finally, Charles's attempts to end the war and spare his peoples bloodshed, hunger, and devastation were influential in the long process that culminated in his beatification by Pope John Paul II (1978-2006) in October of 2004. Prince Xavier's brother-in-law is known to Catholics worldwide as Blessed Charles of Austria.

35 Sixte told his version of the Sixtus Affair shortly after the war in MANTEYER, *op. cit.* Years later XBP wrote a memoir used by Gordon BROOK-SHEPHERD, *The last Habsburg* (New York: Weybright and Talley, 1968) that added or clarified a few points. Chaps. 7-8 of this book deal with the quest for peace. After Zita's death, Brook-Shepherd was able to read her diary. The real fear the imperial couple had that Sixtus and XBP would be assassinated seen in Zita's text shines a new light on Charles's actions. See Gordon BROOK-SHEPHERD, *The Last Empress*, chap. 2 and, especially, chap. 4.

36 Over the course of a century much has been written about the famous Sixtus Affair. Besides the texts of the Bourbon Parmas listed above I benefitted from: 1) Leo J. HAMMERSCHMID *Zita, The Last Empress of Austria: The Story of Her Imperial and Royal Majesty Zita of Habsburg-Lorraine and Her Sojourn in Québec City, 1940-1950* (Montreal: Meridian Press, 1989), 77-93; 2) James BOGLE and Joanna BOGLE *A Heart for Europe: The Lives of Emperor Charles and Empress Zita of Austria-Hungary* (Leominster, Herefordshire: Gracewing, 2004), chaps. 7-8; 3) Justin V. VOVK, *Imperial Requiem: Four Royal Women and the Fall of the Age of Empire* (Bloomington, Indiana: iUniverse Books, 2012), 325-331 and 350-353; and 4) Tibor FRANK, "C'est la paix: The Sixtus letters and the peace initiative of Kaiser Karl I," *Hungarian Review* (Budapest), VI, 5 (Sept. 11, 2015), n. pag.

37 MANTEYER, *op. cit.*, 356, reproduces the text of Sixte's citation, dated June 14, 1919, and indicates that XBP's is identical. Throughout the diplomatic negotiations the Bourbon Parmas had included Belgium's interests.

38 The film series was produced by Richard "Rick" McCallum. The seventh episode was written by George Lucas and Frank Darabang, and directed by Vic Armstrong. The actor Matthew Wait played the part of XBP. Amblin Television/Lucasfilm and Paramount Network Television produced the film, which aired Sept. 21, 1992 on ABC.

BETWEEN THE WARS

The terrible fate of Tsar Nicholas II and his family in the summer of 1918 cast a shadow over the royal courts of Europe when the Great War was winding down and the last military engagements were fought. As in Russia, starving civilians went on strike and rioted, exhausted soldiers mutinied, and revolutionary political movements advanced their causes in the midst of chaos. Separatist forces expanded quickly. Sixte, Xavier, and their brother René helped to get the embattled Charles, Zita, and their children out of harm's way.

Throughout October of 1918 the Emperor tried unsuccessfully to keep the Danubian lands together, save the Crown, and make a separate peace with the Allies. At the end of the month when the volatile situation in Budapest turned hostile, Prince René spirited his five Habsburg nieces and nephews out of Hungary. They left Gödöllő Palace, near Budapest, surreptitiously before sunrise on October 31, 1918. Xavier's twenty-four-year-old brother rode in the last car of a small caravan with the containers of gasoline the vehicles needed for the three-hundred-mile-drive. Late that night René delivered the seven-year-old Crown Prince, Otto, and his little siblings safely to their anxious parents at Schönbrunn Palace in Vienna.³⁹

By the time the first armistice was signed on November 3, the Kingdom of Bohemia had ceased to exist. The Slavs had declared independence in Prague on October 28. Within the following two weeks the Emperor signed a proclamation withdrawing from affairs of state in Austria without abdicating and a similar document for Hungary. As soon as he left Vienna, on November 12, Austria declared itself to be the German-Austrian Republic. Charles and Zita retired to a private Habsburg estate 42 miles from the capital named Eckartsau. Located on the Danube in the Gänserndorf district of Lower Austria, the property has an eighteenth-century hunting lodge. Within a few weeks, troops, royal guards, and policemen at Eckartsau melted away. The imperial family was left with little protection from potential assault by marauding demobilized soldiers or by the new Communist Red Guard. Their situation deteriorated over the following months. In February Prince Sixte appealed to President Poincaré to send military help to save the imperial family. The French president was sympathetic, but needed to consult the prime minister, who was known for his antipathy toward the Habsburgs.⁴⁰ Sixte turned to George V of Great Britain. Xavier accompanied his older brother to London. Between the two they managed to get an audience with the ruler on short notice for Sixte. King George and Queen Mary understood the

³⁹ BROOK-SHEPHERD, *The Last Empress*, 121-122.

⁴⁰ The French prime minister was Georges Clemenceau, the man who had revealed to the public the confidential letters from Charles's attempt to negotiate a separate peace in 1917 that caused the Sixtus Affair crisis.

seriousness and urgency of the matter. The monarch promised help for his embattled crowned colleague who had tried various times to stop the war.

The result of this international royal diplomacy by the Bourbon Parmas was that a highly decorated British officer who spoke German showed up at Eckartsau. Colonel Edward Lisle Strutt convinced Charles and Zita to accept the offer of amnesty made by Switzerland and to leave Austria as soon as the children had recovered from their mild cases of the Spanish flu. The officer from the victorious Allied British Empire cajoled the new socialist Chancellor of German-Austria, Dr. Karl Renner, into allowing Charles to depart without a formal abdication. Strutt intimidated the politician into authorizing the use of the imperial train. After the Habsburg dynasty had ruled most of Central Europe for close to seven centuries, the last Habsburgs were to make their exit with dignity. Strutt and a handful of British military policemen escorted the imperial family into exile. Charles and Zita went to Switzerland to the white-washed manor house on the shore of Lake Constance the Duchess of Parma had inherited from her husband. At the end of the historic journey in March of 1919 the two Bourbon Parma brothers were on hand at *Schloss* Wartegg to welcome them to a safe haven.⁴¹

In 1921, after Charles and Zita had been in Switzerland for two years, Xavier, Sixte, and René assisted them in planning the Easter Bid, an attempt to regain the throne of Hungary. The government in Budapest had undergone some dramatic changes, but technically Hungary was still a monarchy whose king was absent. Zita's brothers were inconspicuous liaisons with France's supportive Prime Minister, Aristide Briand.⁴² They also helped Charles organize the logistics, and Xavier accompanied him part of the way. During the former ruler's cloak-and-dagger trip from Switzerland to Hungary during Holy Week, in March of 1921, his contacts included a childhood friend of the Bourbon Parmas. He was a Carlist aristocrat who had fought in the French Foreign Legion during the War. The cosmopolitan Spaniard named Jaime Lasuén Reischach accompanied Charles on the Orient Express from Strasbourg (Bas-Rhin), on the Franco-German border, to Vienna. The two men had falsified passports, and when they were in their double sleeper compartment Lasuén made some minor attempts to disguise Charles. Xavier shadowed them, traveling in a different railcar and watching carefully who boarded the train and alighted. He kept an eye on movements of guards in the stations, especially at Salzburg,

⁴¹ HAMMERSCHMID, *op. cit.*, chap. 4, BROOK-SHEPHERD, *The Last Empress*, 134-146, and BROOK-SHEPHERD, *The Last Emperor*, chap. 14 cover Emperor Charles's last months in Austria very nicely. *The Last Habsburg*, 223-225, mentions XBP and Sixte. BOGLE and BOGLE, *op. cit.*, 118, also mentions the brothers.

⁴² BROOK-SHEPHERD, *The Last Habsburg*, 257 and 259, mentions the Bourbon Parma siblings in his chap. about the Easter Bid.

where there were many more than usual.⁴³ When they arrived in Vienna, as prearranged, Xavier and his friend Lasuén quietly disappeared. Charles continued on his ill-fated expedition with the help of former members of his Court.

The debonair and intrepid Prince Xavier was a devout Catholic. He was personally very pious. Xavier and his family had many connections to the Solesmes Congregation, an alliance of Benedictine monasteries headquartered 140 miles from Paris near the village of Solesmes, in Sarthe. One of the prince's grandmothers became a Benedictine nun after her children were grown and married.⁴⁴ A younger relative was in the same convent. In Xavier's generation three of his sisters were members of the Sarthe community. The siblings were nuns at Sainte-Cécile abbey.⁴⁵ Xavier and Zita were oblates affiliated with the Benedictines of Solesmes. They were inspired by the spirituality of the sixth-century St. Benedict of Nursia, and adapted the famous monastic Rule of St. Benedict to their lives as lay people. Sixte also attended spiritual exercises at Solesmes. For decades Xavier visited his three sisters at Sainte-Cécile every so often, and lodged less than half a mile away with the Benedictine monks at Saint-Pierre. He enjoyed spending a few days at a time at the grand medieval monastery overlooking the Sarthe River and participating with the monks in their routine of prayers and chant. Both abbeys at Solesmes were known in Catholic circles for being in the forefront of the recovery of Gregorian chant.⁴⁶

The prince born in Tuscany was also a member of the international Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulcher of Jerusalem. For a decade he would be the lieutenant of the French chapter, or lieutenancy, of knights and ladies (1954-1964). This Catholic organization, begun during the First Crusade, continues to this day to give support to Christians in the Holy Land. The knights and ladies aid displaced people, support hospitals, schools, and residences for the elderly, and help restore venerable historic religious buildings.⁴⁷

43 Lasuén was born and raised in Tuscany. His parents (a Spaniard and an Austrian) were in the service of Margherita di Borbone Parma, Xavier's aunt. See Andrés REVESZ, "El diario del Emperador-Rey Carlos." *ABC* (Madrid), Jan. 14, 1925, 6; see BROOK-SHEPHERD, *The Last Habsburg*, 262, and *The Last Empress*, 161-162. Most especially, see Jaime del BURGO, *Tras las huellas de los Austrias*. Introduction by Otto von Habsburg (unpublished ms., 2002), 111-122 and 159-167. Del Burgo used Lasuén's own notes about the trip with the Emperor and stop-over in Vienna.

44 XBP's maternal grandmother was Princess Adelaide von Lowenstein-Wertheim-Rosenberg. She married King Miguel I after he left Portugal. Adelaide joined the Benedictine community of Solesmes when the nuns were living in exile on the Isle of Wight, off the southern coast of England.

45 There is a lovely picture of XBP's mother and her three little-known daughters in their habits in PRASCHL-BICHLER, *op. cit.*, 159.

46 There are many websites on the internet dedicated to the monasteries at Solesmes as well as recordings of the music of the monks and the nuns. See the official websites *Abbaye Saint-Pierre Solesmes* in French, English, Spanish, and German, and *Abbaye Sainte-Cécile de Solesmes*, in French and English.

47 For XBP's involvement in the restoration of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, in Jerusalem, see SANTA CRUZ, *op. cit.*, vol. 11 (1949), 163-167.

Other charitable causes embraced by Xavier were also run by Catholic institutions. For years he was the president of Catholic Action in France.⁴⁸ This international organization of the laity founded in 1860, encompassed many groups. Chapters were in close touch with local ordinaries. Some organizations were purely devotional, others were mainly charitable. One of the most successful, the Christian Workers Youth Movement, combined piety, education, and activities for the improvement of labor conditions.⁴⁹

Some of Xavier's friends were members of the clergy. The most eminent was Pope Pius XII (1939-1958). Their friendship was consolidated in the early 1920s at Rorschach (St. Gall), Switzerland. Archbishop Eugenio Pacelli was a Vatican diplomat stationed at Munich, the capital of Bavaria. Every so often he rested nearby in scenic Rorschach, on the shore of Lake Constance. The papal nuncio occasionally took a break from the pressure of international negotiations, political upheavals, social revolution, and economic crisis in Germany. He relaxed at a residence for members of the clergy in peaceful Switzerland.⁵⁰ Antónia, Xavier's mother, invited Pacelli to lunch or dinner at Schloss Wartegg whenever he was in Rorschach. After he became Pope, Antónia and some of her children visited him every so often at the Vatican.⁵¹ Pacelli is rumored to have personally suggested delicate tasks the multi-lingual Xavier might undertake for the Church in different countries.

Xavier of Bourbon Parma was very active, enjoyed sports, and took delight in physical labor and accomplishments on the family's farms. Nonetheless, he does not appear to have been very robust. He suffered from some serious illnesses over the decades. When he was about twelve years old he had a severe case of articular rheumatism that caused him to miss a school term. He was hospitalized for a few months near Merano, South Tyrol, or Alto Adige, in what was then Austria. The area was known for its medicinal baths. In 1909, at the age of twenty, the prince caught malaria in Asia Minor. Bouts of high

⁴⁸ Ignacio ROMERO RAIZÁBAL, *Boinas rojas en Austria: Reportaje sentimental* (6th print. San Sebastián, Guipúzcoa: Editorial Española, S.A., n.d.), 113, says the XBP became president in 1927. I have also seen references to XBP's presidency of Catholic Action in Manuel MARTORELL, *Retorno a la libertad: el desafío carlista al franquismo* (Luis Hernando de Larramendi Collection, Madrid: Editorial Actas, 2010), 63, and the entry for "Francesco Saverio" on the current *Reale e Ducale Casa di Borbone Parma* website. Accessed in May and Aug. 2018.

⁴⁹ See Marquis D'ARAGON, "Catholic Action in France," *The Dublin Review* (London), 202 (1938), 27-38.

⁵⁰ Institut Stella Maris run by the Sisters of the Holy Cross.

⁵¹ Ignacio ROMERO RAIZÁBAL, *El Carlismo en el Vaticano: Historia en miniatura del trato entre los Papas y los Reyes Carlistas* (Santander, Cantabria: Aldus Velarde, SA, 1968), 126-127. The book dedicates three short chapters, 17-19, to Pius XII's relations to Carlists, especially to XBP. He reproduces part of an obituary written by historian Melchor Ferrer at the time of the Pope's death, and gives some additional information.

fever lasted years. The malaria, most probably, was the cause of the cardiac inflammation he suffered in his twenties.⁵² The car accident in 1914 may also have had after-effects. In November of 1918, when the Armistice was signed at the end of the Great War, Xavier and Sixte had the Spanish flu and were in Saint Michael Military Hospital in Bruges (West Flanders). They were sent to convalesce at a health center run by the Belgians in Cannes (Alps-Maritimes), in southern France.

In 1927, when Xavier was in his late thirties, he married a French aristocrat, Madeleine de Bourbon Busset, daughter of Count Lignières.⁵³ The old Bourbonnais area of central France (departments of Allier and Cher) is dotted with castles and manorial homes built over the centuries by Madeleine's ancestors and extended family.⁵⁴ The wedding guests included Xavier's sister Zita and his first cousin Jaime, the fourth Carlist Claimant to the Spanish throne. The bride carried lilies and wore a sparkling diamond tiara over her white lace veil. The groom, who had marvelous dark brown eyes, a long and elegant neck, and a thin mustache, looked dapper in his Belgian dress uniform covered in the medals he had earned during the First World War and insignias that denoted his membership in dynastic orders from Parma. Over the next thirteen years the couple would have six children. The family made their home on one of Madeleine's country holdings, Bostz, near Besson, five or six miles from Moulins (Allier). Bostz has several houses. Xavier and Madeleine lived in the spacious three-story mansion built in the early nineteenth century complete with turrets, mansard roof, and typical French dormer windows. The couple kept a pied-à-terre in Paris. In 1932 Madeleine inherited Château de Lignières, in Cher, a grand seventeenth-century palace surrounded by an ornamental lake or moat.

Prince Xavier managed his wife's farms in France and his own lands in Italy and Austria. He had introduced a new irrigation and drainage system in several of his properties just south of Camaiore (Lucca), near the villages of Stiava and Piano di Conca. They had been in the Bourbon-Parma family for generations. By tapping into the underground water in the area and channeling it he probably increased the farms' productivity.⁵⁵

⁵² See CLEMENTE, *Aproximación*, 62-63, for rheumatism and malaria; and Clemente in BORBÓN PARMA, CLEMENTE, and CUBERO, *op. cit.*, 51, for youthful heart problems.

⁵³ His name was Georges Louis de Bourbon Busset.

⁵⁴ The Bourbon Busset line is the senior branch of the large Bourbon family dating back to the Middle Ages, however it is not considered royal.

⁵⁵ BALANSÓ, *op. cit.*, 174, and "Francesco Saverio" entry on the current *Reale e Ducale Casa di Parma* webpage mention the location of both farms. Accessed in May and Aug. 2018.

SPAIN

Xavier of Bourbon Parma became involved in Spanish Carlism when he was in his middle forties, in 1934 or '35. He helped the Claimant Alfonso Carlos prepare the Traditionalists for what became the Spanish Civil War.

For a century the proscribed branch of the Spanish Royal Family had led a large counterrevolutionary political movement, known at different times by names that usually included the term “communion” rather than “party.” Carlists challenged the government in Madrid and the Bourbons who ruled from the Spanish capital. The split in the Royal family reflected the chasm in Spanish society that began in the early nineteenth century and is known as the Two Spains. The division was between people who defended, to one degree or another, Spain’s traditions and those who advocated, with more or less enthusiasm, the new liberal and secular organization of society that grew out of the French Revolution. Carlism embraced all estates and classes. Unlike Spanish liberalism, it had a strong popular base, and its leaders and intellectuals tended to be attentive to the concerns of modest folk. Over the course of a century Carlist guerrillas took to the hills and fought the Spanish government and its armed forces to defend their chosen way of life in three civil wars and many smaller conflicts. The Claimants ran a parallel government over a fifth of the country during two of the wars. Whenever the movement was legal, Traditionalists sent significant minorities to the national Cortes or legislative body as a sort of fifth column. At its parliamentary height in 1871 this not-so-loyal opposition consisted of approximately eighty elected representatives. More often than not counterrevolutionaries had a vigorous press in spite of government censorship.

In the early decades of the twentieth century urbanization was reflected in a number of Carlist regional labor unions, and in the creation of the *Requeté*,⁵⁶ a paramilitary organization centered in the cities and towns. Since the 1920s Traditionalist women had been active in various associations dedicated to propaganda, education, and charity work. In many places there were legitimist clubhouses or “circles” for political, cultural, and social events.

Carlists inherited the theoretical principles of Spanish political Traditionalism forged at the end of the Old Regime during the reign of Ferdinand VII (1808-1833), and adapted them gradually to new realities created by social and economic changes in society. The Carlist motto “*Dios, Patria, Fueros, Rey*,” or “God, Fatherland, Regional Rights, King,” embodied concrete institutions and customs as well as more abstract laws and attitudes.⁵⁷ The Carlists were the

⁵⁶ The term “*Requeté*” can refer to the the Carlist paramilitary force or to a single member.

⁵⁷ Short surveys of Carlist thought and agenda from the 1930s include [Manuel FAL CONDE] *El Pensamiento carlista sobre cuestiones de actualidad*. Edited by El Requeté de Buenos Aires (Buenos Aires: Artes Gráficas, 1937) and Jaime del BURGO, *Ideario* (San Sebastián, Guipúzcoa: Comunion

great defenders of the institutional Catholic Church and of private, communal, property. Spanish legitimism dated back to 1833 when Ferdinand's little daughter Isabel was placed on the throne and his brother Infante Carlos, who was the presumptive heir, was bypassed.

Xavier's familial Carlist credentials were splendid. His father, Robert, was the only Duke of Parma who never acknowledged the liberal line of the Spanish Royal Family that reigned in Madrid since 1833.⁵⁸ Robert and his brother, Enrico, Count Bardi, fought in the 1870s for the third Don Carlos, or Carlos VII, in northern Spain in the Third Carlist War.⁵⁹ Their sister Margherita married the Claimant. Doña Margarita, as Spaniards know her, was the most beloved royal woman in Carlism's history. During the Third War Xavier's aunt organized the Asociación Católica de la Caridad, which was similar to the Red Cross, and operated in territory held by the legitimists. Xavier's familial links with the banished branch of the Spanish Royal Family were strengthened because his aunt Neves of Braganza was married to Carlos VII's only brother, Alfonso Carlos. Neves had accompanied her husband during the Third War. While Margherita tended to the wounded in Navarre, Neves, wearing the long riding habit of the time and a Carlist beret, accompanied the troops on horseback in Catalonia and Aragon.

Alfonso Carlos had not been involved in Spanish affairs for over half a century when, in 1931, his life of travel and leisurely pursuits changed suddenly. Three months after the parliamentary monarchy dissolved and Alphonse XIII went into exile, the fourth Carlist Claimant, Jaime, who was Carlos VII and Margherita's only son, died unexpectedly. Alfonso Carlos inherited Carlist leadership.⁶⁰ He was eighty-two years old. Alfonso Carlos I, as he was known to his followers, was the last prince in the direct male line of the proscribed branch of the Spanish Royal Family. In private, the white-haired Bourbon referred to his

Tradicionalista, 1937). For Carlism's general worldview, in English, see Alexandra WILHELMSEN, "The Theory of Spanish Political Traditionalism (1810-1875)," in *Identidad y nacionalismo en la España contemporánea: el Carlismo (1833-1975)*. *Jornadas organizadas por la Universidad de Wisconsin-Madison y la Fundación Hernando de Larramendi*. Edited by Stanley G. Payne. Luis Hernando de Larramendi Collection (Madrid: Editorial Actas, 1996), 44-54.

58 XBP's great-grandfather Charles Louis reigned as King Louis II of Etruria (1803-1807), Duke Charles I of Lucca (1821-1847), and, finally, Duke Charles II of Parma and Piacenza (1847-1849). He supported the first Don Carlos for years, but acknowledged Isabel II (1833-1868) in 1850 after he abdicated. Charles Louis paved the way for his son, Duke Charles III (1849-1854), to acknowledge the government in Madrid officially. XBP's grandfather did so in Oct. of 1852, and visited Isabel II and her Court in Jan. of 1853. Charles Louis visited twice, in 1864 and 1866.

59 Bardi was wounded badly at the Battle of Lácara (Navarre) in Feb. of 1875.

60 The five Carlist Claimants to the Spanish throne in the direct line were: Ferdinand VII's brother Carlos V (1833-1845), Carlos VI (1845-1861), Carlos VII (1868-1909), Jaime I (1909-1931), and Alfonso Carlos I (1931-1936).

new responsibility as a “crown of thorns,” but he accepted it.⁶¹ The Claimant, who lived in Austria, rented a house in southwest France at Ciboure, across the Nivelle River from Saint-Jean-de-Luz (Pyrénées Atlantiques), to have a base of operations near Spain. During the Second Republic Don Alfonso Carlos did his best to reorganize Spanish Traditionalists politically for the obvious oncoming confrontation with the government, to attract sectors of Carlism that had left the Traditionalist Communion in 1888 and in 1919,⁶² and to make arrangements for some sort of leader to succeed him temporarily.⁶³

Like the Portuguese First Republic twenty-five years earlier, the Second Spanish Republic began with violent attacks against the Catholic Church, a new constitution that secularized the country, and anti-clerical legislation that expelled some of the clergy and deprived the Church of its property. The Second Republic was almost overwhelmed by Communists who took orders from the Comintern’s headquarters in the Soviet Union⁶⁴ and wanted to use the regime as a means to proletarian Revolution. Anarchists contributed greatly to an escalation of violence. Carlist exertions intensified after the upheavals in northern Spain in the fall of 1934 known as the Asturian October Revolution. In the spring of 1936, when a Popular Front government was installed and the wholesale assassination of peaceful clergymen began without much restraint by the authorities,⁶⁵ the Traditionalists were well on their way toward starting the Fourth Carlist War.

Alfonso Carlos asked his close relative Xavier to help him coordinate Carlist activity.

The younger man, of course, had more energy than the aged Alfonso Carlos, and his military experience was much more recent.⁶⁶ While not denying any of the political aspects of Carlism’s worldview or agenda, both very

61 Alfonso Carlos de BORBÓN, *Una mirada íntima al día a día del Pretendiente carlista: Cartas de Don Alfonso Carlos al Marqués de Vessolla*. Edited by Ignacio Miguélez Valcarlos (Pamplona: Gobierno de Navarra, 2016), 458 and 460, letters dated at Vienna, Oct. 28 and Nov. 5, 1931.

62 At the time of their split they were led, respectively, by Ramón Nocedal (1888) and Juan Vázquez de Mella (1919).

63 Alfonso Carlos’s term as Claimant is covered in Melchor FERRER Domingo TEJERA, and José F. ACEDO, *Historia del Tradicionalismo español* (30 vols., Seville: Ediciones Trajano and Editorial Católica Española, 1941-1979), in vols. 30-1 (narrative) and 30-2 (documents). Vols. 11-30 of this monumental publication (*HTE* in subsequent notes) were written by Ferrer alone.

64 The Comintern, or Third International of Communist National Parties, was founded by Vladimir Lenin in 1919 to coordinate Communist strategy and activities in different countries.

65 The number of clergymen assassinated in Spain, mainly in 1936, exceeded 6,500, included twelve bishops, and is reputed to have constituted the worse persecution of the Catholic Church in its long history.

66 In his youth Alfonso Carlos was a Papal Zouave (1868-1870). He fought for Pius IX (1846-1878) to defend the Papal States from the forces of the Risorgimento (1870) and participated in the famous defense of Porta Pia in Rome. For over two years (1872-1874) he was the commander-in-chief of Carlism’s forces in northeastern Spain during the Third Carlist War.

pious men focused on the religious facet of the approaching confrontation.⁶⁷ By the time Prince Xavier joined the Carlists their preparations were quite advanced. Manuel Fal Conde and José Luis Zamanillo González-Camino, who were attorneys, were excellent promoters and organizers. Fal Conde, from Seville, was the Traditionalist Communion's chief executive officer; Zamanillo, a parliamentarian from Santander (Cantabria), was in charge of the militias. Several colonels in the Spanish army who were Carlists oversaw military instruction. Xavier's main roles were to liaise with Alfonso Carlos as the elder man gradually retreated to Austria on account of his age, to coordinate different groups of conspirators, to chair meetings of Carlists preparing the uprising, and to help with the armament of the *requetés*. The prince made numerous trips from his home in central France to the Pyrenees, to Portugal, to Austria, to Belgium, and to Germany. He purchased war matériel, especially machine guns. When some of the shipments were held up by Belgian authorities, Xavier convinced the Belgian Royal Family to have them released.⁶⁸ He is reputed to have donated generously for the acquisition of weapons and ammunition.⁶⁹

In May of 1936 the prince helped bring together for talks Carlist conspirators and generals in the regular armed forces who were also preparing an uprising to save the Republic from Marxism and to restore law and order.⁷⁰ The two key figures were the retired José Sanjurjo Sacanell and Emilio Mola Vidal. Sanjurjo, who was in exile in Portugal, was to lead the uprising and to be a provisional head of government after the conflict. Mola was organizing the military revolt from his base in Pamplona (Navarre). Negotiations about terms for collaboration went on until the very last moment. The Traditionalists did not have tanks or planes and the regular armed forces needed the militias to jumpstart the uprising. However, representing the Carlists and reaching an agreement with the generals was difficult for Xavier. The military commanders got the upper hand in the negotiations, partially because Carlist leadership was divided over terms for collaboration. At the last moment, the Traditionalists committed their paramilitary units to join the regular army (Carlism's old enemy) and settled for a minimalist plan for restructuring Spain after the conflict. Both sides agreed on the abolishment of anti-religious and anti-ecclesiastical laws and policies. Most specific Carlist political goals would be addressed af-

67 See Alexandra WILHELMSSEN, "Carlism's Defense of the Church in Spain, 1833-1939," *Faith & Reason* (Christendom College), XVI, 4 (Winter 1990), 355-370.

68 Santiago GALINDO HERRERO, *Los partidos monárquicos bajo la Segunda República* (2nd ed., Madrid: Ediciones Rialp, S.A., 1956), 332.

69 See SANTA CRUZ, *op. cit.*, vol. 2 (1940), 55.

70 Antonio de LIZARZA IRIBARREN, *Memorias de la conspiración: 1931-1936* (5th ed., Biografías y Memorias Collection, Madrid: Ediciones Dyrsa, 1986), 55-56.

ter the rebellion had been successful. Restoration of the traditional monarchy, with its many intermediate institutions, would be debated later.

On July 14, 1936, Prince Xavier, who was at Alfonso Carlos's rented house in Ciboure (Pyrénées Atlantiques), affixed his signature to a number of copies of the instrument of engagement that Fal Conde had already signed. The prince also approved instructions for the *requetés*.⁷¹ Various copies of these documents and others were smuggled over the border by different people.⁷² On the 17th, at 6:30 in the morning, a nervous Xavier also supervised as historic coded telegrams were sent to Sanjurjo, Francisco Franco Bahamonde, and several other important conspirators from the main telegraph office at Bayonne (Pyrénées Atlantiques). They indicated that the *requetés* would present themselves to the military authorities of their respective areas two days later, on July 19.⁷³ A few hours after the telegrams were sent, Xavier drove Antonio de Lizarza Iribarren to the Biarritz-Bayonne airport. Lizarza was the Navarrese regional delegate of the *Requeté* and had been instrumental in preparing Carlist paramilitary units for the uprising. He was flying to Lisbon, on a chartered French plane, to fetch General Sanjurjo. The prince saw him off at noon.⁷⁴ The next day, July 18th, Xavier received a telegram from Alfonso Carlos, who was in Austria, with the formal ratification of the agreements and plans. The short message for wide distribution restated that the Carlists would join the military troops and rise against the Republic to "save religion and fatherland."⁷⁵ On the 19th Xavier went to Pamplona in the afternoon. From an office window with a view onto the main square, the Plaza del Castillo, the prince, Fal Conde, and Mola saw thousands of excited *requetés* ready to go into action.⁷⁶ They had been arriving all day in trucks and buses from Navarrese villages.

71 Both docs. in *HTE*, vol. 30-2, 101-102. The instrument of engagement is also reproduced in DEL BURGO, *Conspiración*, 547, and in LIZARZA, *op. cit.*, 95.

72 Dolores BALEZTENA ASCÁRATE, "Memorias de una chófer. Veinticinco años al volante (1930-1955)." Ed. Javier Baleztena. Unpublished ms., 62-63. This lady was a sister to Joaquín Baleztena, the president of the Carlist Regional Committee of Navarre. Dolores drove her brother and several other prominent figures to France and back on July 14. Some of the documents were hidden in one of her shoes. She repeated the story to me at her home in Pamplona, on the Paseo Sarasate, in the fall of 1969. B[ernardo] Félix Maiz, *Alzamiento en España de un diario de la conspiración* (Pamplona, Navarra: Editorial Gomez, 1952), 283-284, explains that on July 15 he carried some of the papers, for Mola, sewn into the lining of his cap. Maiz was the general's civilian assistant.

73 MAIZ, *op. cit.*, 285, and GALINDO HERRERO, *op. cit.*, 340. Maiz, acting as secretary, sent the telegrams.

74 Lizarza's plane made a mysterious unscheduled landing in Spain near Burgos. He was arrested on the spot and taken to prison in Madrid, thus delaying Sanjurjo's trip for a few days.

75 LIZARZA IRIBARREN, *op. cit.*, 95.

76 Javier CUBERO SÁNCHEZ, *Don Javier de Borbón Parma en el exilio: El Carlismo contra el fascismo* (Biblioteca Popular Carlista Collection, n. pl., Ediciones Arcos, S.L., 2017), 16.

Two and a half months after the beginning of the Spanish Civil War, the eighty-seven-year-old Claimant died in Vienna a few hours after being run over by a truck when he and Neves were crossing a street. As word spread throughout Spain legitimists organized numerous memorial Masses. Fal Conde and a dozen Carlists crossed half of Europe, wearing their khaki uniforms and iconic red berets, in the hope of arriving in time for the exequies. The Spaniards missed the grand funeral in Vienna, presided by the Cardinal-archbishop at the Church of St. Elizabeth of Hungary.⁷⁷ However, on September 30 they carried the casket of their King into the chapel where he was entombed at the onion-domed *Schloss* Puchheim, in the Vocklabruck district of Upper Austria. Some of the men had tears running down their cheeks as they buried the last of their Kings.⁷⁸

Alfonso Carlos had named Xavier to be Regent upon his death.⁷⁹ At the interment, before the crypt beneath the floor of the chapel was closed, Prince Xavier stood up and read a short text. He solemnly promised to carry out the responsibilities as Regent that Alfonso Carlos had given him. The most important were to keep the Carlists united and to find a solution to the problem of succession. The next day Fal Conde declared the Regency in effect.⁸⁰ Alfonso Carlos had made known in various private letters that he hoped Xavier would eventually be the next Claimant or King of Spain.⁸¹ However, at the time, the Bourbon Parma prince was not interested in aspiring to the non-existent Spanish throne.⁸² The man born in Italy who identified with France was not inclined to turn himself into a Spaniard. In the days following Alfonso Carlos's

77 The prelate was Dr. Theodor Innitzer, former rector of the University of Vienna and ex-Minister of Social Affairs in the Austrian government.

78 Ignacio ROMERO RAIZÁBAL, *Boinas rojas en Austria* chronicles the trip and funeral. Ramón OYARZUN, *Historia del Carlismo* (3d. ed., Madrid, 1965), 433-434, is very critical of the book. Both men were part of the little group that went to Austria. See also, *HTE*, vol. 30-1, 231-236.

79 The document was written in Jan. of 1936 and made public in April. The text was the only one of its kind in Carlism's long history and was written by Luis Hernando de Larramendi, an attorney, political thinker, and former secretary of Don Jaime. Hernando de Larramendi consulted half a dozen other politicians, jurists, and intellectuals. See *HTE*, vol. 30-2, 73-74 (text of the doc.), and vol. 1, 138-140 (narrative). The text is also in Jaime del BURGO, *Conspiración y Guerra Civil* (Madrid-Barcelona: Ediciones Alfaguera, S.A., 1970), 428-431.

80 Both docs. in *HTE*, vol. 30-2, 116-118 and 119-120. XBP's text is also in DEL BURGO, *Memories*, 437-439.

81 In the letters Alfonso Carlos listed many reasons for thinking XBP was the appropriate person to be called to the throne of a restored traditional monarchy in Spain. See, among others, the missive to XBP himself dated March 10, 1936, one to Fal Conde, dated at Vienna July 8, 1936, *HTE*, vol. 30-2, 118, and two letters to Esteban Bilbao quoted at length in Jaime DEL BURGO, *Conspiración*, 481-482 and in SANTA CRUZ, *op. cit.*, vol. 5 (1943), 127-128. BALANSÓ, *op. cit.*, 169, quotes from another letter written to XBP's sister Zita in Aug. of 1935.

82 See *HTE*, vol. 30-1, p. 237, and see Jeremy MACCLANCY, *The Decline of Carlism* (Reno and Las Vegas: University of Nevada Press, 2000), 77-79.

funeral Xavier made several declarations to the press in Austria and France explaining that he had accepted a temporary responsibility and was not a Claimant. He underscored his position by stating forcefully “*Je suis Français*.”⁸³

During the course of the Spanish conflict two of Xavier’s siblings contributed to the War effort. His sister Isabella was an assistant nurse at Pamplona in the Sagastibelza Ward of the Alfonso Carlos Hospital for over a year.⁸⁴ Their brother Gaetano fought as a *requeté* in the Carlist militia under a pseudonym. Gae de Lavardin served on the front in the third company of the Navarra *Tercio*⁸⁵ for five months until he was wounded seriously by shrapnel in the Battle of Mt. Bizkargui, fought near Guernica, in Biscay.⁸⁶

While the Carlist militiamen proved their bravery, spirit, and good training on many battlefields, the Traditionalists suffered a number of serious blows in the rearguard besides losing the last uncontested Claimant of their royal dynasty. General Sanjurjo’s death in a plane crash on July 20, 1936 and the shift to new leadership among the rebel generals meant Carlists had also lost their influential sympathizer who had agreed to advance their cause when the conflict was over. In the early months of the war Mola was outmaneuvered politically by Franco, who became commander-in-chief of the Spanish armed forces and head of state in October of 1936. Franco immediately began to concentrate power in his hands and to give a Fascist tone to his administration. He had not participated in the negotiations with the Carlists before the uprising and, apparently, did not feel bound by the agreements Mola and Sanjurjo made with them. Mola’s death in another airplane accident in June of 1937 further weakened Carlism’s political prospects.

On April 19, 1937, General Franco decreed the merger of the Traditionalist Communion and another anti-Communist political organization that had militias fighting on the nationalist side, Falange Española.⁸⁷ The Unification decree favored the Falange, which was a Fascist association. Carlist leaders pro-

83 “Declarations du prince Xavier de Bourbon-Parme,” *Le Temps* (Paris), Oct. 6, 1936, 2, and “Dans le parti carliste. Déclarations du prince Xavier de Bourbon-Parme,” Oct. 7, 1936, 2. Jacques Bernot, *Les Princes cachés ou histoire des prétendants légitimistes: 1883-1989* (rev. ed., Paris: Éditions Lanore, 2015), 182, also mentions an Austrian newspaper.

84 See Pablo LARRAZ, *Entre el frente y la retaguardia: La sanidad en la Guerra Civil. El Hospital Alfonso Carlos, Pamplona, 1936-1939* (Luis Hernando de Larramendi Collection, Madrid: Editorial Actas, 2004), 367-368, and photographs in the section of illustrations without pagination.

85 “*Tercio*” was the name the Carlists gave their battalions.

86 The story of Gaetano’s eight months in Spain is narrated in Ignacio ROMERO RAIZÁBAL, *El Príncipe requeté: una historia con sabor a novela* (2nd ed., Santander: Aldus, S.A., 1966). Emilio HERRERA ALONSO, *Los Mil días del Tercio de Navarra: biografía de un tercio de requetés* (Madrid: Editora Nacional, 1974), 92-96 and 102-103, describes the battle on May 9, 1937. Romero Raizábal accompanied the prince part of the time. Herrera Alonso served in the same *tercio* as Gaetano.

87 The Falange, itself, had merged in 1934 with a syndicalist group called Juntas de Ofensiva Nacional Sindicalista (JONS) and become Falange Española y de la JONS.

tested against this forced union with Fascism, against the political marginalization of the Traditionalist Communion, and against the creation of a one-party system. However, they were discrete. They tended to refrain from promoting dissension within the nationalist forces during the war. They knew their militiamen were needed to fight and to keep up morale among the conscripts in the army. In February Xavier had chaired a three-day meeting of Carlist leaders in Portugal near Penalva do Castelo (Viseu) called by Fal Conde. They met at Casa Ínsua, a grand eighteenth-century seigneurial country house surrounded by vineyards. Over twenty men discussed the upcoming decree and other matters. In the following months Prince Xavier was very busy dealing with the different reactions among the Carlists to ostensible Unification, and he toured the fronts to visit the disgruntled *requetés* in the trenches. On May 19, 1937, a month after the Decree of Unification, Xavier responded by swearing to uphold the Basque *fueros*. The modest ceremony in Guernica (Biscay) symbolized Carlism's support of strong regional government and of the principle of subsidiarity. The position was diametrically opposed to liberal centralization and to totalitarian statism.

In December of 1937, when Xavier was in Spain again to visit groups of Carlists, he declared publicly that members of the Traditionalist Communion would need a dispensation from him to accept important positions in the Spanish State's new political party, the Falange Española Tradicionalista y de la JONS. Within a few days, while in Granada, Xavier was given a letter from General Franco asking him to leave Spain. Before going away the prince went to see Franco about the Unification and about the increasingly dictatorial and Fascist nature of his government. They met on Christmas Day in Burgos, war-time capital of nationalist Spain. Franco politely suggested again that Xavier quit the country.⁸⁸ Two days later, on December 27, 1937, the stateless prince who had missed celebrating Christmas with his family and whose services to nationalist Spain were not appreciated by the new dictator-in-the-making, crossed the Pyrenees. He was escorted by a handful of people, including his old friend Tirso de Olazábal's son Rafael and a member of the ever-loyal Orbe family, Ignacio, the sixth Marquis Valde-Espina.

THE SECOND WORLD WAR: BELGIAN ARMY IN 1940

Two and a half years after leaving Spain Xavier was very busy. During the chaotic months of May and June, 1940 he served in the Belgian army as it fought

⁸⁸ SANTA CRUZ, *op. cit.*, vol. 1 (1939), 157-158, summarizes XBP's conversation with Franco, which the Prince related to a group of Carlists, including Santa Cruz, in Madrid in 1956. See MARTORELL, *op. cit.*, 62-63, for an overview of XBP's stay in Spain between Nov. 28 and Dec. 27, 1937.

valiantly against the Nazi blitzkrieg for eighteen days, beginning on May 10. When King Leopold surrendered, on May 28, in the hope of preventing his small country from becoming a wasteland, he is reputed to have asked Xavier to go to Paris with a confidential message for the French Prime Minister, Paul Reynaud. The colonel of an army that was disintegrating managed to get a dramatic ride on a British torpedo boat that zigzagged in the English Channel avoiding German submarines under water and planes in the sky. Xavier disembarked at Le Havre (Seine-Maritime), France, and was received in Paris by Reynaud. The politician was under great stress as he realized the Germans had bypassed the fortified Maginot Line of defenses close to the Franco-German border and were approaching France through Belgium. The prince returned to the front at Dunkirk (Nord), where some Belgian units of the Fourth Division were still fighting. They were collaborating with the French 39th Army in the Battle of Dunkirk. Xavier made his way home in June a few days before the Germans entered Paris.⁸⁹

LIFE IN VICHY FRANCE CONDITIONED BY THE SECOND WORLD WAR

In May and June of 1940 relatives who lived in Belgium and Luxembourg fled as the Germans overran these countries. The first air raid of the Luftwaffe in Belgium hit Flemish Brabant about a mile from the home of Xavier's sister Zita, Ham Castle at Steenokkerzeel. Paratroopers landed close by. Many members of the family had gathered at Steenokkerzeel to celebrate Zita's birthday. A few hours later, as the royal party drove away, a bomb shattered part of Ham's roof.⁹⁰ The relatives took refuge in Xavier and Madeleine's house at Bostz, where Zita had already stored important papers.⁹¹ The immediate goal of the refugees was to find safety in neutral Portugal. Eventually, many would live in Canada or the United States for a few years. The group was led by Xavier's mother Antónia of Braganza, Zita, and, in turn, Zita's twenty-eight-year-old son Otto. Shortly after the annexation of Austria in 1938 the new Nazi government in Vienna had issued an order to apprehend the former Crown Prince if possible.⁹² Xavier's nephew, who had a doctorate in politics from the Catholic University of Louvain, had been sounding the alarm against Hitler for years. Otto had just returned from America, where he had addressed the US Senate on the subject and been given a standing ovation.

⁸⁹ SANTA CRUZ, *op. cit.*, vol. 2 (1941), 54.

⁹⁰ BROOK-SHEPPHERD, *The Last Empress*, 271.

⁹¹ HAMMERSCHMID, *op. cit.*, 138, for Zita's precautionary measures at Bostz.

⁹² BROOK-SHEPPHERD, in *Uncrowned Emperor*, 147, and in *The Last Empress*, 266. Also, VOVK, *op. cit.*, 477-478. Many of Otto's obituaries in July of 2011 also mention he had been wanted by the Nazis.

Xavier accompanied his relatives to the Spanish border. Several of his children went with the group to Portugal.⁹³ The caravan that left Bostz traveled to Bordeaux (Gironde). At the great port on the Garonne River they linked up with Xavier's brother Felix and his wife, Grand Duchess Charlotte I of Luxembourg (1919-1964). Some of Xavier's extended family obtained visas for Portugal from the heroic Portuguese consul Aristides Sousa Mendes, the diplomat who disobeyed orders from his government and issued thousands of permits to displaced people. Xavier's mother and the royals-on-the-run managed to make it to Portugal in the midst of wartime chaos.⁹⁴ They received aid along the way from various contacts and admirers. Spanish Carlists who came forth on their behalf included some old friends, such as Rafael Olazábal and Jaime Lasuén. Olazábal offered hospitality in his large home at Saint-Jean-de-Luz (Pyrénées Atlantiques).⁹⁵ Various members of the family crossed the border on different days. Lasuén provided moral support and a warm welcome at Hendeye-Irún for those who entered Spain with Zita on June 18.⁹⁶

Shortly after helping some members of his extended family on their way to safety, Xavier returned home, fetched his pregnant wife, piled the rest of their children into his Citroën, and drove south again. They, too, sought shelter. Xavier suspected he was also on the Nazi wanted list given his involvement in Catholic institutions and his role in Carlism. Since he was not welcome south of the Pyrenees, he stayed in southern France, at Pau (Pyrénées Atlantiques). A few weeks later, in July, the forty-two-year-old Madeleine gave birth to the couple's last child. The boy was named Sixte after Xavier's talented older brother, who had died in 1934.⁹⁷

Xavier and Madeleine's home in Allier was located in what was known as Vichy France after the Franco-German Armistice of June 22, 1940. This part

93 XBP's son Hugues, or Carlos Hugo, who was ten years old, was on the trip. His recollections are in Josep Carles CLEMENTE, *Carlos Hugo de Borbón Parma: Historia de una disidencia*. Prologue by S.A.R. don Jaime de Borbón Parma y Orange-Nassau (Barcelona: Editorial Planeta, S.A., 2001), 67-68. Several of the longer accounts of this trip, HAMMERSCHMIND, *op. cit.*, 147-153, and BROOK-SHEPHERD, *Uncrowned Emperor*, 147-153, and *The Last Empress*, 271-278, mention XBP and the stay at Bostz, but do not include Zita's mother or name the children.

94 BROOK-SHEPHERD, in *Uncrowned Emperor*, 152, and *The Last Empress*, 277, says Dr António de Oliveira Salazar, the ruler of Portugal, told Archduke Otto he was high on the hit list of Nazi agents in Portugal and asked him not to stay long in the country.

95 SVENJA [pseudonym], "Grand Duke Jean During World War II," *Luxarazzi*, a blog about the ruling family of Luxembourg, mentions Rafael Olazábal's hospitality at St.-Jean-de-Luz. Posted on June 6, 2014. Accessed in June of 2018.

96 Carlos Hugo in CLEMENTE, *Carlos Hugo*, 67-68.

97 Sixte died in 1934, at the age of forty-seven after a six-month illness, leaving a wife and twelve-year-old daughter. He is buried about five miles from Bostz (Allier) at Souvigny in the Bourbon pantheon at the medieval church known as the "cradle of the Bourbons." AMIGUET, *op. cit.*, dedicates chap. 10 to the Prince's last illness, death, and funeral.

of the country was nominally free and was administered from the town of Vichy (Allier) by the elderly Marshal Henri-Philippe Pétain, the hero of Verdun.⁹⁸ The Bourbons' estate, Bostz, was within hiking distance of the demarcation line separating the two parts of the nation. The crossing point in the area, northern Allier, was Pont Régemorts, a long eighteenth-century bridge over the Allier River at Moulins.

A few months after Xavier and his immediate family had returned to Allier, the cosmopolitan prince served as liaison in another international round of high-level talks. The Halifax-Chevalier Agreement between Great Britain and France, in December of 1940, tweaked the alliance between the two countries in light of Nazi control of part of France. More importantly, it was a humanitarian arrangement regarding transportation of food from France's African colonies to the mother country in spite of an embargo. The British acquiesced to the proposal that the Royal Navy refrain from stopping ships carrying food and the Vichy government, in turn, agreed not to send any of the merchandise to occupied France. Prince Xavier was involved in the talks because he was on friendly terms with the British Foreign Secretary, Edward Wood, who was Viscount Halifax, with France's Secretary of Education, Dr. Jacques Chevalier, a Catholic philosopher, and with Pétain, who was, ostensibly, trying to govern what was left of free France. Xavier had known Pétain since the Great War. This accord has caused some controversy among politicians and historians because it was oral, not written, in its final form. In 1949 the prince published a book in French giving his account of the negotiations.⁹⁹

Xavier addressed Spain's legitimists twice in 1941. Carlism was undergoing one of the most difficult moments in its long history. Carlist militias, the *tercios* of *requetés*, had played a pivotal role in the early weeks of the Spanish Civil War, and had fought until the very end. They had contributed to the nationalist victory. However, Spain's Traditionalists had not risen against the Second Spanish Republic to install a dictatorship with a Fascist coloring. Carlists became bitter as General Franco consolidated his power after the war while they had very little influence in the reconstruction of the country. Most of their agenda was overlooked. Carlist requests for a gathering of the national Cortes, or legislative body, to determine the nature of the future regime and, hopefully, to find a ruler were ignored. Proposals for some sort of temporary adminis-

⁹⁸ The French government had relocated a number of times over the course of a month (Paris, Tours, Bordeaux, Clermont-Ferrand), and settled in Vichy on July 10, 1940.

⁹⁹ I have read three reviews of Xavier de Bourbon, *Les accords secrets franco-anglais de décembre de 1940* (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1949), but have been unable to find a copy of the book itself. The prince's account is seen by the three reviewers as a defense of the Vichy government. SANTA CRUZ, *op. cit.*, vol. 11 (1949), 158-162, also comments with Carlism in mind. He wrote in the late 1970s, and his text emphasizes the Carlist Regent's identification with France rather than Spain. The other two reviews are listed in the sources at the end of this study.

tration in which Xavier would have a significant role were dismissed. Franco had already banished or put under house arrest several major Carlist figures, outlawed their entire political apparatus, shut down most of their newspapers and journals, closed their centers, and restricted their meetings and free speech.

Having become a monarchist political movement without a King or Claimant, Spanish legitimists were in the very awkward and weak position they had dreaded for decades. According to Carlism's signature Theory of the Two Legitimacies, a Monarch or Pretender had to be called to the throne by the country's old laws¹⁰⁰ and personally be supportive of Spain's traditional institutions, religion, and culture.¹⁰¹ As Xavier had stated to the press when Alfonso Carlos died, he was a temporary Regent. Carlists expected him to help them find a solution to their serious predicament. However, the Regent who lived in France was not providing much leadership at such a critical juncture. Presumably, the main reason was the difficulty of travel and even communication during the Second World War.

In January of 1941 the exiled Alphonse XIII abdicated and transmitted his rights or claims to his third son, Juan. Although Don Juan would gradually alienate Franco by advocating liberal ideas, the emergence of this twenty-eight-year-old Claimant to the throne greatly complicated matters for Spain's legitimists. A few weeks later, in February, the Carlists lost their Queen. The elderly Maria das Neves of Braganza, widow of Alfonso Carlos and Antónia's sister, died in Vienna.¹⁰² War conditions prevented Xavier from going to Austria or even sending telegrams.¹⁰³

In early March the prince wrote an open letter to the Carlists. After mentioning his beloved aunt's death, he reiterated his commitment to fulfilling the responsibility he had accepted from his uncle King Alfonso Carlos, "even though it is turning out to be much more of a burden than expected," Xavier stated that his mission was underscored by Alfonso XIII's transferral of his "supposed rights." The rest of the open letter made the case for prolonging the Regency in light of the difficult circumstances of the time both in Spain and internationally.¹⁰⁴

A few days after Xavier signed his letter, Alphonse XIII died in Rome. Years earlier, after the First World War, while Alphonse was on the throne in Madrid, he had helped several members of Xavier's family who were in dire straits. He

100 Mainly the Semi-Salic Law of Succession embodied in the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713.

101 Alexandra WILHELMSEN, "The Conspiracy of La Rápita and the Carlist Theory of the Two Legitimacies," *Continuity* (The Intercollegiate Studies Institute), 11 (1997), 49-61.

102 The funeral was in Vienna and the interment next to Alfonso Carlos at Schloss Puchheim (Attnang-Puchheim, Vocklabruck), in Upper Austria.

103 XBP, letter to Manuel Fal Conde, dated at Bostz March 3, 1941, in SANTA CRUZ, *op. cit.*, vol. 3 (1941), 66-67.

104 *Ibid.*, vol. 3 (1941), 64-66.

offered hospitality and a safe haven to the pregnant and almost penniless Zita and to her children when Charles died in Madeira in 1922. Their last child, Archduchess Elisabeth, was actually born at El Pardo Palace, near the Spanish capital. Xavier's sister and Habsburg nieces and nephews lived in northern Spain under Alphonse's protection for seven years. The ruler also extended a helping hand to Don Alfonso Carlos. When Austria was in turmoil after the First World War and the fortunes of all Habsburgs, Bourbons, and Braganzas who owned property there were dwindling, on account of hyperinflation, high taxes, and confiscations, the ruler in Madrid helped his relative Alfonso Carlos. He gave instructions to his ambassador in Vienna to rent *Schloss Ebenzweier* from the prince in name of the Spanish government.¹⁰⁵ By putting this country estate on the shore of Lake Gmunden under his auspices, Alphonse saved it for the family.¹⁰⁶

When the former ruler died Xavier may have been mindful of his favors to Zita, Alfonso Carlos, and Neves in their time of need. The prince organized a memorial Mass in Paris at the Basilica of Notre Dame des Victoires. The Mass was said by the Cardinal Archbishop¹⁰⁷ on March 15, 1941. The invitations to the event were to pray for the repose of the soul of "His Catholic Majesty¹⁰⁸ King Alphonse de Bourbon, Head of the Royal Capetian House, King of Spain."¹⁰⁹ Carlists who heard about the curious wording of the invitation, printed less than two weeks after Xavier's open letter to the legitimists, must have been puzzled by what appeared to be a recognition of Alphonse XIII as legitimate King of Spain (as distinct from *de facto* ruler).

In July of 1941 Xavier signed an important manifesto to the Carlists. The long text was dated at Bostz on the feast-day of Spain's national patron, St. James the Greater, *Santiago el Mayor*. Once again, the Regent confirmed his commitment to Carlism. He reiterated some of the basic principles or components of Spanish Traditionalism's worldview, and restated the difference between the liberal parliamentary monarchy (represented by Alphonse XIII, his son Don Juan, and their direct ancestors) and the traditional monarchy advocated by

105 BORBÓN, *Una mirada íntima*, letters to the Marquis Vessolla, dated at Puchheim July 10, 1921, 146-149; dated at Puchheim July 24, 1921, 149-151, and dated at Vienna Sept. 14, 1921, 155-158.

106 XBP inherited Ebenzweier and Puchheim, near Salzburg, from Alfonso Carlos, who, in turn, had received them both from his aunt Teresa of Habsburg-Este (Chambord's wife). See Ricardo Mateos SAINZ MEDRANO, "Puchheim and Ebenzweier, Two Old Royal Properties," *Royalty Digest. A Journal of Record* (Ticehurst, East Sussex), 103 (Jan. 2001), 200-205.

107 The cardinal who was serving as Archbishop of Paris was Dr. Emmanuel Célestin Suhard.

108 His or Her Catholic Majesty was an official title that dated back to Ferdinand II of Aragon and Isabel I of Castile in the Renaissance.

109 Francisco M. de las HERAS Y BORROMEO, *Carlos Hugo, el Rey que no pudo ser*. Prologue by José María Montells y Galán (Madrid: Colegio Heráldico de España y de las Indias, 2010), 230, includes a photograph of an invitation.

Carlism. Xavier also reflected on the nature and convenience of the Regency. He signed as “Prince Regent of the Traditionalist Carlist Communion.”¹¹⁰

LIFE IN OCCUPIED FRANCE DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR

After the Germans took over all of France in November of 1942, Pétain had very little power, but was, at least in theory, the head of state of the whole country. Overt German occupation meant the people of Allier, as those of other parts of what had been Vichy France, became subject to Nazi surveillance, high-handed harassment, curfews, arbitrary decrees, food requisitions, gasoline shortages, and illegal detentions. They endured foreign troops, vigorous implementation of anti-Semitic laws, informants, and ever-increasing outbursts of violence. One of the measures that had the most impact was the policy of drafting young men from subjugated countries to work for the Third Reich in German factories. The men in France who dodged conscription into this compulsory labor service away from home were called *réfractaires*. Many fled to rural areas to hide in woodlands and thickets, and some joined the Resistance movement. In March of 1944 Xavier was active in Allier’s new committee to help hide these men.¹¹¹ The liaison to the prince was a local priest who had a *réfractaire* nephew.¹¹² Xavier and Madeleine allowed draft dodgers to take cover at Bostz. The estate is rather isolated and has some groves of fir, oak, and pine trees. The land is on the edge of the little Moladier Forest that belonged to the French nation. Additionally, two gullies or small ravines cross the area and are screened by trees. The *réfractaires* dug shallow tunnels in the woods where they could hide from the low-flying German planes looking for them and for Resistance fighters.

While Prince Xavier and his family faced the daily difficulties of living in occupied France, the people in Spain suffered the austere post-Civil War period, often called The Years of Hunger. Politically, the Carlists continued to ignore Unification and to resist working with the Falange, they still did not have a Claimant, Don Juan’s supporters were very active, and another Pretender appeared on the monarchist horizon. This handsome archduke was a grandson of the revered Carlos VII and Doña Margarita and was also a great-nephew of Alfonso Carlos. His name, in Spanish, was Carlos de Habsburgo Borbón.¹¹³

110 XBP’s Manifesto of Santiago is reproduced in SANTA CRUZ, *op. cit.*, vol. 3 (1941), 163-179.

111 Comité d’Aide aux Réfractaires du STO (Service du Travail Obligatoire).

112 Fr. Léon Viriat.

113 Carlos de Habsburgo was the fifth son of Archduke Leopoldo Salvatore di Asburgo-Toscana (a member of the branch of the Habsburg dynasty that had ruled the Duchy of Tuscany until the Risorgimento swept it off the map in 1859). His mother was the Infanta Blanca de Castilla de Borbón (Carlos VII’s oldest daughter).

The would-be-King's followers called him Carlos VIII. They tended to be Carlists who broke away from the mainstream of their movement, but shared the same worldview. Unlike Xavier and Juan, who were banned from Spain, Carlos was allowed to live in the country. In 1944 he moved to Barcelona. Carlos VIII consistently articulated traditional Carlist political principles as well as his admiration for General Franco for having defeated Communism.

In June of 1944, at the end of the academic year, Xavier fetched his oldest son from boarding school in southern France. The determined father arrived at the Benedictine abbey in Dourgne (Tarn)¹¹⁴ on his bicycle. Xavier took his fourteen-year-old boy, perched on the bike, over fifty miles to Sète (Hérault), where they were able to catch a train north. The teenage Hugues had been quite isolated in his monastic school. He was taken aback at Sète to get a glimpse of the devastation the War had caused since Vichy France was occupied by German troops: pot-holes, unexploded mortars, and most especially, neglected corpses strewn on the ground.¹¹⁵

FRENCH RESISTANCE TO GERMANY'S THIRD REICH

The Carlist Regent joined the French Resistance movement when he and his son Hugues returned from the south. Prime Minister Winston Churchill's administration greatly increased its supply of weapons to France's guerrilla fighters in late 1943 and early 1944. Resistance activities reached their height in the summer of 1944, just after the Allied landing at Normandy on June 6.

There were many small bands of freedom fighters in Allier. Some were Communist because Marxism had been strong for generations among the sharecroppers of the area. These militants belonged to a national organization, the Francs-Tireurs et Partisans Français, or FTPF,¹¹⁶ that was independent of other Resistance fighters. They had their own agenda: establishment of a Communist government in France closely linked to the Soviet Union after defeating Nazi Germany. Their headquarters in Allier was in Montluçon. In June of 1944 the FTPF in the area was regrouping their Partisans and wanted to gather one of their forces in the wooded areas near Besson. The man given the task was a teacher in Moulins named Jean Ameurlin. He asked Prince Xavier if the men could also use some of his property for a few days. Ameurlin was unaware that the prince was already sheltering some *réfractaires* when they needed to hide. He was impressed by Xavier's willingness to collaborate with the *maquis* or guerrilla band.¹¹⁷ The prince built a few sheds

114 The small school was part of the Abbaye Saint-Benoit d'En Calcat.

115 Carlos Hugo in CLEMENTE, *Carlos Hugo*, 69-70.

116 Also abbreviated as FTP.

117 Jean Ameurlin is identified as "Commandant FTPT interrégional et FFI n. 1180" in "Bourbon

for the Maquisards, gave basic military instruction to some, and offered to turn the library in the house into an infirmary for wounded Partisans. He was happy to help coordinate activities with other groups. At the time there were close to a dozen *maquis* in the Bocage Bourbonnais, or northern Allier, alone. Rather than staying for a few days at Madeleine's estate, the men used the property for about two months. This particular *maquis* had been formed in 1943, and was named Danièle Casanova after a Communist heroine of the French Resistance who was executed at the Auschwitz Extermination Camp in May of that same year. Starting with eighty men, the Casanova *maquis* grew to have between 100 and 120 members. Like most civilians at the time, the Partisans tended to get around on bicycles. When possible, some went home at night. At first, the Casanova Maquisards engaged in acts of sabotage; in the summer of 1944 they felt strong enough to confront the Nazis directly.

On June 18 the Casanova men ambushed a German convoy near the tiny village of Châtillon. They killed over a dozen people and took refuge at Bostz. The group made a show of force on July 14, Bastille Day. Using vehicles they commandeered, the freedom fighters toured half a dozen towns in the vicinity. The camp was immediately discovered and attacked twice by Germans, by members of the Milice or French Nazi paramilitary police, and by other sympathizers. In the first skirmish, on July 16, nine Maquisards were arrested at Bostz. On the 18th, as the Partisans fought in the Moladier Forest and at Bostz, two men were killed, ten were arrested, one was wounded so badly that he was taken away to have a leg amputated, and two were hurt. After the skirmish the Bourbons took the risk of getting a local physician to care for the two guerrillas who were hurt badly on their land. The two spent a few days at Bostz in the library at the main house. After Camp Casanova was discovered, the Partisans had to move elsewhere. In August they regrouped and relocated a few miles farther south to the little Chapilliere Forest near a hamlet named Meillard.¹¹⁸

Parme, Xavier de," *Amis de la Fondation pour la Mémoire de la Déportation de l'Allier*, or *AFMD*, website. Accessed in May and Sept. 2018.

118 My narrative about the Casanova Resistance militia band that was based at Bostz for two months was pieced together using the following publications and blogs besides the entry for XBP on the *AFMD* website: 1) Jean-Marie LIVERNAIS, Lieutenant F.T.P., Lucien DEPRESLE, Lieutenant F.T.P., and Robert JOYAN, Aspirant F.T.P., "Le maquis Danièle Casanova," *Association Nationale des Anciens Combattants et Ami(e)s de la Résistance, Comité de l'Allier* website. Accessed in Aug. and Sept. 2018. 2) Comité local Meillard-Le Montet (Allier), "Le Camp Danièle Casanova," *Association des Anciens Combattants et Ami(e)s de la Résistance* website. Accessed in Dec. 2018; 3) Henri-Ferréol BILLY, "Le camp FTP Casanova (parti 1): de fin 1942 au 14 juillet 1944," *Histoire et Généalogie* website. Posted July 2, 2016. Accessed in Aug. and Sept. 2018. 4) Henri-Ferréol BILLY, "Le camp FTP Casanova (parti 2): du 15 juillet 1944 à la Libération," *Histoire et Généalogie* website. Posted July 16, 2016. Accessed in Aug. and Sept. 2018.

In the confusing days of mid-July two lads were seized at their homes by the Nazi government's secret police, the Gestapo.¹¹⁹ The young men, who were *réfractaires* and probably also members of the Casanova *maquis*, were from Besson and had been seen entering and leaving Bostz. Their families were sharecroppers who worked on the Bourbons' land. The prince rode his bicycle thirty miles to Vichy to speak on their behalf.¹²⁰ Xavier had gone to France's temporary capital frequently during the war to intercede with Pétain for people seized by the Nazis and also to help the Marshal communicate with Great Britain behind the scenes.¹²¹ This time he was not able to see Pétain personally, and returned to Bostz not knowing for sure if the two from Besson would be freed. His efforts were successful. The two lads from the village were released on July 27. By then Xavier himself had been arrested. Madeleine seems to have been present when he was apprehended at home on their little son's fourth birthday, July 22, 1944. There are conflicting versions of the prince's arrest.¹²²

PRISONER OF THE NAZIS: VICHY, CLERMONT-FERRAND, NATZWEILER-STRUTHOF

Over a period of ten months the Carlist Regent was held in captivity in various detention centers, in France, Germany, Austria, and several places in Italy. Madeleine tried to get her husband released, sent him packages that were never delivered, took up the home-schooling he had started during the war, and handled some of the family's business. She had no news of her husband during the entire ten months and did not even know if he was alive.

The prince's torments began close to his home, in Vichy. He spent many days in a dark cell located in the basement of the Gestapo jail. Xavier was interrogated three times and physically roughed up at each session. While confined

119 Their names were Jean-Marie Auclair and Marcel Virlogeux. They were, respectively, 21 and 20 years old.

120 "Bourbon Parme, Xavier de," *Amis de la Fondation pour la Mémoire de la Déportation de l'Allier* website and "Xavier de Bourbon, il fut notre roi idéal," *Lys Noir*, 18 (Oct. 27, 2015), 11.

121 In Aug. of 1945, when the prince testified at Pétain's trial, he said he had been to see the marshal many times before the spring of 1943. He had gone frequently to intercede for people who had been arrested and to act as liaison between Pétain and the Allies. XBP stated that the last time he was received by the marshal was on May 18, 1943. The transcript of the interrogation, in Spanish translation, is available in SANTA CRUZ, *op. cit.*, vol. 7 (1945), 124-130. The text is taken from the official proceedings of the trial, published in French.

122 In chronological order, various accounts of XBP's arrest are: 1) letter XBP wrote on Aug. 13, 1945 (to an unknown addressee) reproduced in the entry "Xavier de Bourbon Parme," on the webpage of *Amis de la Fondation pour la Mémoire de la Déportation de l'Allier*; 2) ROMERO RAIZÁBAL, *El prisionero*, 19-21; 3) María Teresa in BORBÓN PARMA, CLEMENTE and CUBERO SÁNCHEZ, *Don Javier*, 60-62; and 4) Carlos Hugo in CLEMENTE, *Carlos Hugo*, 71.

in Vichy, the prince was condemned to death.¹²³ The charges were terrorism (a term used for Resistance activities), espionage (for Great Britain), and Communism.¹²⁴ Fortunately, Pétain was able to get the execution postponed. On the other hand, at a certain moment during the prince's ten-month ordeal, the Nazi establishment contacted Francisco Franco, in Spain, and asked if he would like Xavier to be part of an exchange of prisoners. The Spanish *Generalísimo* is reputed to have declined the offer to help him and to have echoed Xavier's statement to the press after Alfonso Carlos's death that he was a Frenchman, not a Spaniard.¹²⁵

Xavier was kept for a few weeks at a military prison in Clermont-Ferrand (Puy-de-Dôme).¹²⁶ While there, he was classified as a *Nacht und Nebel* captive, a detainee accused of political and Resistance activities who was expected to disappear into the "Night and Fog." No information would be given to the family.

Another notable *Nacht und Nebel* prisoner in Clermont-Ferrand was Dr. Gabriel Piguet, Catholic bishop of the area. Piguet was known for his anti-Nazi pronouncements. He had also helped protect a priest wanted by the Nazis, and arranged for some Jewish children to hide in Catholic boarding schools in his diocese.¹²⁷ Piguet had been arrested almost two months before Xavier, in front of a large crowd. He was detained right after leaving the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Assumption after high Mass on Pentecost Sunday. By apprehending the clergyman publicly, before he entered the episcopal residence across the street from the church, the Nazis turned him into a celebrity. Both men, Xavier and the bishop, who were close in age, got sick in the military jail.¹²⁸

On August 20 approximately 250 captives from the same prison in Clermont-Ferrand were deported to the Natzweiler-Struthof Camp in the Vosges

123 None of the published accounts of XBP's life I have seen indicate exactly which Nazi official or court condemned him to death while he was in Gestapo custody.

124 XBP listed these three charges in his testimony at Pétain's trial. See SANTA CRUZ, *op. cit.*, vol. 7 (1945), 125-126. They have been repeated numerous times.

125 This incident is repeated in books about Carlism and about the Bourbon Parmas, but sources are scarce. The most specific reference I have seen is CLEMENTE, *Carlos Hugo de Borbón Parma*, 70-71. The author affirms that Ramón Serrano Suñer (Franco's brother-in-law and an important figure in the early years of his government) personally confirmed the story in conversation with him.

126 XBP was held at the Caserne d'Assas, the military barracks on Rue Pélissier that German forces had taken over from the French 92nd Infantry Regiment.

127 Half a century after his death Piguet was acknowledged by the State of Israel as Righteous Among the Nations for helping save Jewish people during the Holocaust at great personal risk. In 2002 the corresponding medal was given to the Bishop of Clermont-Ferrand at the time, Hippolyte Simon, by Elie Barnavi, former Israeli ambassador in France. See article by Marc-Alexis Roquejoffre, "Gabriel Piguet, un évêque dans la torment," on the *Diocèse de Clermont-Ferrand* website. Posted on Nov. 5, 2017. Accessed in July 2018.

128 Gabriel PIGUET, *Prison et déportation: Témoignage d'un évêque déporté* (Dijon: L'Échelle de Jacob, 2014), 56. [Orig. pub. 1947.] XBP is mentioned sixteen times.

Mountains near Strasbourg (Bas Rhin), France.¹²⁹ Xavier and the bishop were the last to leave their cells because they could barely get up from their cots. The prisoners from Clermont-Ferrand were on the train when Paris was liberated on August 25. The trip to Natzweiler, approximately 400 miles, took ten miserable and dangerous days and nights punctuated by drama and tragedy. Xavier and the ecclesiastic, who was still wearing his magenta cassock, were placed alone in a small third class compartment, and were guarded by three well-armed policemen from the Nationalist Socialist German Workers' Party, the dreaded SS. The prince was handcuffed part of the way. Most of the captives were stuffed into box cars with very little ventilation. The only food or water available for anyone were provided at some of the stops by the Red Cross and by Catholic charitable groups. Dozens of people, especially priests, wanting to greet the bishop at many stations were held back by soldiers and barricades. Along the route tracks had to be repaired often while the train full of prisoners was unable to advance. More than once, the rail lines were damaged by air raids just in front of the train. A British pilot from the Royal Air Force also managed to bomb the locomotive without hitting the train cars full of captives. Prisoners and guards with rattled nerves waited for a new engine. At Paray-le-Monial, the town in Saône-et-Loire known for its sturdy romanesque basilica and for devotion to the Sacred Heart, a *maquis* attacked in the hope of freeing the many captives. Partisans were killed in the skirmish.¹³⁰ When the train finally reached its destination, Xavier looked out the window and, for the first time, saw prisoners of the Nazis in their striped uniforms and caps. The prince, who usually was impeccably attired, muttered to Piguet "I hope they don't dress us as PUNCHINELLO like those men over there."¹³¹

Natzweiler was the main concentration camp for *Nacht und Nebel* prisoners, and it was very overcrowded when Xavier, the bishop, and the others from Clermont-Ferrand arrived. Most of the inmates worked all day, on a starvation diet and a few hours of sleep, after their roll call before daybreak. They provided slave labor in underground workshops with little air making various kinds of motors for the Third Reich.¹³²

Xavier was quite weak by the time he arrived at Natzweiler. Both he and the clergyman were abused physically when they hobbled off the train. In his memoirs Piguet says Xavier was beaten with the butt of a rifle.¹³³ The prisoners,

129 Jean-Paul Gondeau, "Le 20 août, 240 résistants son expédiés à Dachau, la moitié ne reviendra pas," *Clermont-Ferrand/Armé Conflicts* webpage. Posted Aug. 22, 2014. Accessed in Aug. of 2018.

130 PIGUET, *op. cit.*, 47-54, for his recollections of the trip.

131 *Ibid.*, 55, quoting XBP.

132 Work at the granite quarry near the camp had decreased drastically by the time XBP was at Natzweiler because Adolf Hitler's building projects had been halted.

133 PIGUET, *op. cit.*, 56.

including the sickly prince in his mid-fifties, had to carry heavy loads for two hours while hiking five miles from Rothau's railway station up Mont-Louise to the concentration camp.¹³⁴ Xavier and Piguet spent their six-day stint at Natzweiler in the Revier, the infirmary. While there, they became acquainted with General Charles Delestraint, a famous World War I hero who had come out of retirement to help save France.¹³⁵ Every night they could hear victims being taken from the barracks to the crematorium to be killed. As they tried to sleep in their racks, they wondered if they would be next. The crematorium was about a mile away. Xavier, Piguet, and Delestraint were told about the flames and fumes by other captives. The most common form of murder was through injection of a lethal substance. However, some victims had a macabre death that involved being hung from large butcher hooks. When the prince testified at Marshal Pétain's trial in August of 1945, he declared he had seen 328 captives hanging, ready to be executed.¹³⁶

At the time Natzweiler was more or less evacuated, in September of 1944, Prince Xavier, Dr. Piguet, and General Delestraint were among the thousands of prisoners sent to the infamous Dachau Concentration Camp near Munich, in Bavaria, Germany. By then they were wearing striped prison clothes and uncomfortable wooden clogs. They made the two-and-a-half-day train trip prostrate on mattresses in a boxcar packed full of people. The train pulled up to the concentration camp after dark on the 6th. Two other trains arrived at about the same time. Lack of ventilation had caused almost half of the prisoners on the one from Compiègne (Oise), in France, to die of suffocation.¹³⁷

SEVEN AND A HALF MONTHS AT DACHAU

For months the establishment at Dachau did not know Xavier's full identity. He was simply prisoner number 156,270. Bishop Piguet reports in his memoirs that on their first day at the camp their files were substituted for new ones by the inmates who handled the papers of incoming captives. The men forced to work as clerks were well educated Catholic priests. They managed to make two new files containing as little information as possible.¹³⁸ Additionally, a Polish prisoner who was distributing uniforms recognized Xavier as a school-

134 Prisoners who could not walk and carry a heavy load were usually shot in the back of the head when they fell. Piguet, however, was spared. After he stumbled several times, other captives were allowed to help him walk and carry the suitcases he still had with him. The luggage may have contained liturgical objects for saying Mass.

135 XBP mentioned Delestraint at Petain's trial. See SANTA CRUZ, *op. cit.*, vol. 7 (1945), 126.

136 *Ibidem*.

137 PIGUET, *op. cit.*, 67-68, describes the trip to Dachau.

138 *Ibid*, 61-62, explains that XBP was the first to figure out what had happened. He says he himself got positive proof after the war.

mate from Stella Matutina. He was able to do the prince some favors. One was to make sure that, for the time being, he received a jacket that did not have the red *Nacht und Nebel* identifying mark on it.¹³⁹

During part of the time in Dachau Bishop Piguet was housed in various barracks for clergymen. He is known today among Catholics for having been the only bishop who ever performed a clandestine ordination to the priesthood while in prison.¹⁴⁰ Shortly thereafter, at the end of January, 1945, Piguet's cassock, pectoral cross, and amethyst episcopal ring were returned. Wearing his bright cassock and gold cross over wooden clogs and the ragged striped pants he was issued at the camp, Bishop Piguet was an extraordinary sight at the drab and depressing outdoor roll calls.

Xavier of Bourbon Parma would survive almost eight months at Dachau, albeit just barely. He was exposed to all kinds of degradation. Proximity to people dying and to corpses stacked openly here and there took its toll psychologically. The prisoner's nerves were rattled by constant fear of violent abuse by SS guards and their dogs and by the ruthless "kapos" in charge of work gangs. Like thousands of other inmates, the prince born in Tuscany suffered from malnutrition, sleep deprivation, and fatigue. Long roll calls in the harsh winter weather and labor outdoors next to the main camp at The Plantation, an experimental farm of medicinal plants, also affected his health.

The prince's physical condition deteriorated. He tried to stay out of the infirmary because many people were euthanized there and the cadavers sent to the crematorium.¹⁴¹ However, after some months Xavier was taken to the Revier, and then was transferred to a barrack for terminally ill patients established to isolate them for fear of contagion. He appears to have had three life-threatening illnesses simultaneously: epidemic, or exanthematic, typhus, double pneumonia, and mastoiditis.¹⁴² Typhus, spread by lice, caused over 15,000

139 ROMERO RAIZÁBAL, *El prisionero*, 38-40; Carlos Hugo in CLEMENTE, *Carlos Hugo*, 73; and María Teresa in BORBÓN PARMA, *La transición desde el frente exterior: Una lección de actualidad*. Prologue by Josep Carles Clemente (Biblioteca Popular Carlista, Madrid: Magalia Ediciones, 2001), 62.

140 In Dec. of 1944 Piguet ordained Karl Leisner, a German deacon who had tuberculosis. Leisner was beatified by John Paul II in 1996. The Bishop's account of this famous story is PIGUET, *op. cit.*, 100-104. Johann NEUHAUSLER, who followed the ceremony from the hallway (for lack of space in the room), describes the event in *What Was It Like in the Concentration Camp at Dachau? An Attempt to Come Closer to the Truth* (4th ed., Munich, Bavaria: Trustees for the Monument of Atonement in the Concentration Camp at Dachau, n.d.), 52. This book has had more than thirty-five editions and printings.

141 PIGUET, *op. cit.*, dedicates chap. 7 to the Revier at Dachau and NEUHAUSLER, *op. cit.*, 11 and 20. See ROMERO RAIZÁBAL, *El prisionero*, 39, and Guillaume ZELLER, *The Priest Barracks: Dachau, 1938-1945*. Translated by Michael J. Miller (San Francisco, California: Ignatius Press, 2017), 60 and 114.

142 ROMERO RAIZÁBAL, *El prisionero*, 14 and 44, states that XBP had typhus, and dedicates 50-52 to exanthematic typhus. The prince's daughter María Teresa in BORBÓN PARMA, CLEMENTE, and CUBERO SÁNCHEZ, *op. cit.*, 184-185, indicates that he had double pneumonia.

deaths at Dachau while Xavier was there. Double pneumonia is so serious that in our twenty-first-century hospitals it usually elicits round-the-clock attention in an intensive care unit. Mastoiditis is an infection of the mastoid cells surrounding the inner ear that causes excruciating pain and can lead to incapacitating damage of the brain. Xavier's infection may have been a result of blows to the head, which were very common at the camp.

Somehow the prince overcame typhus and pneumonia without antibiotics. He survived the mastoiditis infection thanks to two physicians who were also inmates. One was Dr. Roche, a French oculist from Thiers (Puy-de-Dôme) who had coincided in prison with Xavier and the bishop in Clermont-Ferrand. Dr. Roche took the risk of allowing his consultation room to be used for a covert Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve. While SS guards made the rounds in the hallway right outside the room, a young French Dominican friar conducted the clandestine service for a few dozen laymen.¹⁴³ Piguët indicates in his *Prison et déportation: Témoignage d'un évêque déporté*, that the doctor from his own diocese did a lot of good at Dachau.¹⁴⁴ In Xavier's case, he realized the prince was in critical condition, but might be saved. He alerted a new Austrian captive who was a cranial surgeon. This young Jewish physician operated on Xavier at midnight in primitive conditions. He performed an emergency trephination for the mastoiditis infection behind the prince's left ear. No anesthesia was available for the clandestine surgery that involved perforating the temporal bone of the skull. Xavier's head, arms, and legs were tied to prevent him from moving or moaning. After the operation Dr. Roche hid the patient from the guards and Nazi medical staff for a few days, by moving him from place to place, so he would not be given up for dead and taken to the crematorium. As soon as the prince was able to stand, he was put to work outdoors. The surgery saved Xavier's life as well as his sanity. The day after the operation Dr. Roche told him the infection was so widespread that he had been on the verge of having brain damage.¹⁴⁵ During Pétain's trial the prince stated succinctly: "At Dahau I was very sick, and I was operated in extraordinarily precarious conditions. The result is that I have lost part of my hearing."¹⁴⁶

In the spring of 1945, as the war was coming to an end, the Nazi establishment at Dachau was overwhelmed. Tens of thousands of prisoners from other

143 ZELLER, *op. cit.*, 189. In 1947 the friar who said the Christmas Eve Mass, Alexandre Morelli, O.P., published a book about his experiences as a prisoner.

144 PIGUËT, *op. cit.*, 71 and 74.

145 The harrowing story of XBP's surgery is mentioned in many publications, and is relayed with a few more details in ROMERO RAIZÁBAL, *El prisionero*, chaps. 9 and 10. Part of this text quoting Xavier is repeated in SANTA CRUZ, *op. cit.*, vol. 5 (1943), 165-166, and in María Teresa in BORBÓN PARMA, CLEMENTE, and CUBERO SÁNCHEZ, *Don Javier*, 186-187. None of the publications give the name of the Austrian surgeon or Dr. Roche's full name.

146 XBP in SANTA CRUZ, *op. cit.*, vol. 7 (1945), 125.

camps that were being evacuated were transferred to Dachau in March and April. The US Army Air Forces bombed the camp numerous times. On April 9 a raid hit the electrical generator and the main water line, thus crippling the compound. Hundreds of people died daily in a raging typhus epidemic, coal ran out, the crematorium stopped burning, corpses piled up. The Marxist inmates, focusing on upcoming proletarian Revolution, were very active positioning themselves to welcome the Communist armies that were rapidly making their way west from the Soviet Union. To alleviate the overcrowding, more than 7,000 people were sent off on a pathetic death march. They were mainly Russians, Jews, and Germans. The latter included eighty Catholic priests.¹⁴⁷ Another group was shipped away by rail. A third contingent, consisting of about 2,000 inmates, was locked in boxcars without ventilation or water on a train that went nowhere.

THE *PROMINENTEN*

Xavier and Piguet were also evacuated from Dachau along with approximately 135 other notable captives. Dozens of the VIP prisoners had recently arrived at Dachau from different camps. Some of the detainees had been allowed to keep their own clothes during their confinement. They included about thirty-five prisoners of kin, or family members, of men who had tried to kill Hitler in July of 1944 or defied him directly. An Englishman who had arrived at Dachau after years of imprisonment elsewhere saw Xavier for the first time on April 25, wrote in his memoirs that the prince was among the men who “had suffered hardship and indignities without breaking down,” looked “thin and worn,” and was “dressed in ordinary prisoner’s clothes.”¹⁴⁸ The VIPs or *Prominenten* (as the Germans called them) from seventeen different nations were transferred from Bavaria to Alto Adige or South Tyrol, an Austrian area that had been incorporated into Italy at the end of the First World War. Apparently Nazi authorities thought the high-ranking captives might be used as hostages for bargaining during negotiations for surrender.¹⁴⁹ The prince and Bishop Piguet had been separated for most of their time at Dachau, but were reunited during the last phase of their incarceration.

The captives were driven away from Dachau just a few days after Franklin D. Roosevelt died and Harry S. Truman became the thirty-third President of

¹⁴⁷ ZELLER, *op. cit.*, 205-206, gives the number of people in each of these four groups without indicating if the Jews were Russians, Germans, or both.

¹⁴⁸ Captain S[igismund] Payne BEST, *The Venlo Incident: A True Story of Double-Dealing, Captivity, and a Murderous Nazi Plot*. Introduction by Nigel Jones (London: Frontline Books and New York: Skyhorse Publishing, 2009), 221. [Orig. pub. 1950.]

¹⁴⁹ As it turned out, the USA and Great Britain insisted on unconditional surrender.

the United States. The prisoners were organized in three different convoys that left in the second half of April, 1945, over a ten-day period. During that time Prince Xavier, Bishop Piguet, and Dr. Johann Neuhausler, a canon from the Catholic Cathedral at Munich (Bavaria) who was a prisoner, were saddened by the murder of General Delestraint.¹⁵⁰ The three men were in the second group to leave Dachau.¹⁵¹ Their transfer was overseen by SS Lieutenant Edgar Robert Stiller. The distinguished hostages were guarded by close to seventy-five armed men: dozens of SS and a few members of the Gestapo. The *Prominenten* (including some children) were taken from pillar to post in the confusing last few days of the Third Reich as order and communication among the German armed forces and government broke down. The prisoners did not know where they were going. The camp was rife with rumors about a Nazi redoubt in the Alps where the German high command could hide or make a last stand. The hostages wondered if they might be taken to this place in the mountains. They also were afraid of being shot by their guards on some lonely country road. The deportees were packed into buses and trucks with canvass roofs. The prince, the bishop, and the canon were lucky to have seats in one of the buses, and not to be forced to sit on the hard bed of an overcrowded truck.¹⁵² Their convoy left Dachau on April 24 at 8:00 p.m., and advanced slowly all night. The hostages went through the smoldering ruins of Munich and were taken to a Nazi labor-education camp for “undesirables” near Innsbruck (Tyrol), Austria. A Prussian priest who was able to keep a diary noted that during their journey in the dark they were almost hit by a British air raid near Rosenheim.¹⁵³ After a sleepless night, they arrived at Reichenau at five in the morning of April 25.

All three convoys from Dachau converged at Reichenau. One of the prisoners of kin, Fey von Hassell, saw Prince Xavier there for the first time. She wrote that he was “so emaciated he could hardly stand on his feet” and was among the captives wearing “dirty striped prison clothes.”¹⁵⁴ Xavier’s own des-

150 At the time, Delestraint was sharing a cell with Piguet in the Bunker, a building where some VIP prisoners were held in slightly relaxed circumstances. XBP was not one of them. Neuhausler was just down the hall from Delestraint and Piguet. The general had been given the impression he was being released. Instead, he was taken out of sight and shot. See PIGUET, *op. cit.*, 139-142, and see NEUHAUSLER, *op. cit.*, 33.

151 Hans Günter RICHARDI, *Ostaggi della SS nella Alpenfestung: La deportazione dalla Germania all'Alto Adige di famosi internati nel lager*. Preface by Caroline M. Heiss (Bolzano, Alto Adige: Edition Raetia, 2005), 174.

152 *Ibidem*, quotes the diary of Dr. J. Neuhausler.

153 *Ibid*, p. 176, references the diary of Fr. Karl Kunkel.

154 Fey von HASSELL, *A Mother's War: The True Story of a Woman's Capture by the Nazis—and Her Courageous Struggle to Reunite with Her Family*. Edited by David Forbes-Watt. (New York: Bentley Books, 1992), 202. This book was first published in Italian in 1987, and has been translated into German, Turkish, and French. There are various editions in English. One is entitled *Hostage of the Third Reich*. Von Hassell's story was made into a two-part film by RAI (Radiotelevisione Italiana), and aired on May 7 and

cription of the gathering of notables near Innsbruck included the understated observation: “It was actually curious to see some of us in the clothing of deportees mixed among elegantly dressed German officers, who were also held as hostages by the SS.”¹⁵⁵ A number of the prisoners Xavier met after leaving Dachau had recently spent time at Flossenburg Concentration Camp, located in Bavaria’s Upper Palatinate. They may have been able to give him news of his brother Luigi and sister-in-law Maria Francesca of Savoy, who were confined at Flossenburg with their two children.¹⁵⁶

Reichenau was a small and filthy camp. Xavier and some of the captives spent a few nights there. The bunks had soiled straw pallets and were infested with lice and other bugs.¹⁵⁷ Reichenau did not have enough space to house all three convoys of *Prominenten*. Thus, after the arrival of the last group they were transferred to four or five old buses, and taken farther south. The presence of Edgar Bader alarmed the prisoners. They knew he was a member of a Gestapo unit whose main job was to go from one place to another to eliminate captives.¹⁵⁸ They kept an eye on the boxes of grenades stowed on one of the vehicles. As the convoy wound its way high into the cold Alps one of the inmates tried to cheer up the people in her bus. She was a popular German screen actress and singer in her twenties named Isa Vermehren. The entertainer, who was a prisoner of kin, had managed to hang on to her accordion. Many of the jittery captives were glad to release tension by singing along with her for awhile in German and English.¹⁵⁹ In the early hours of the morning the *Prominenten* crossed the mountains through the Brenner Pass into Alto Adige. As different buses broke down, they had to get out and push for a spell. The distinguished deportees heard Allied British bombers flying overhead, and in the moonlight, noticed a village that had been hit earlier. Their worries mounted. The prisoners saw a constant stream of people walking by them silently. The ghostly

8, 2006, a few years before her death. My edition of the book dedicates 193-219 to the odyssey of the *Prominenten*, starting at Dachau. There are a lot of details, but only one mention of XBP. See *Castello di Brazzà* webpage for Von Hassell’s family and home in Italy. Accessed in May and June 2018.

155 XBP’s declaration at Petain’s trial, in SANTA CRUZ, *op. cit.*, vol. 7 (1945), 129.

156 Kurt SCHUSCHNIGG, *Austrian Requiem*. Translated by Franz von Hildebrand (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1946), 266. Luigi, Maria Francesca of Savoy, a daughter of King Victor Emmanuel III of Italy (1900-1946), and their two oldest children survived two years as prisoners of the Nazi regime.

157 BEST, *op. cit.*, 225-226.

158 *Ibid.*, 199-200.

159 ISA VERMEHREN, *Reise durch den letzten Akt: Ein Bericht (10-2-’44 bis 29-6-’45)*. (3d. ed., Hamburg: Christian Wegner, Verlag, 1948), 183-185, for the passage over the Brenner Pass in the Alps. The book was first published in 1946. This lady eventually became a school teacher and a Catholic nun. She joined the Congregation of the Sisters of the Sacred Heart, continued to record music, and was the principal of two schools in Germany. In the 1980s, after she retired from teaching, she hosted (still in her habit) a weekly talk-show on television for a decade. She was the first of the *Prominenten* to publish her memoirs in German after the war.

figures were former POWs, ex-forced laborers of the Third Reich, and refugees heading south in the hope of finding their loved ones alive and their homes still standing.

The nervous *Prominenten* reached the town of Villabassa or Niederhorf in the midst of heavy rain on April 28 a few hours before Italian Communist Partisan fighters killed Benito Mussolini, the former Fascist dictator. After the captives crossed the Brenner Pass into Alto Adige and the news of their existence began to spread, they attracted the attention of different units of armed men who had their respective agendas. The area was teeming with German soldiers and Italian freedom fighters. Partisans had taken Turin, Milan, and Genoa between April 25 and 27. The Allies were finishing their spring campaign in northern Italy, having liberated Bologna, Parma, Verona, and Venice between April 23 and 28. Furthermore, Italian civilians were positioning themselves to gain power in a post-war Italy. Tension between the German- and Italian-speaking population in Alto Adige was also mounting. The *Prominenten* became pawns in the rivalries of these different groups, especially the Wehrmacht, or regular German army, the SS, and the Gestapo. A lone French officer also turned up to have a look. Many of the soldiers and militiamen were very nervous not knowing whose orders were still valid or what would happen to them once a cease-fire were proclaimed. The situation was volatile.

When the hostages arrived at Villabassa they were forced to shiver in their cramped vehicles for hours while rain turned into sleet and snow and while Stiller and Bader figured out what to do next. The captives were restless and the guards feared some would try to escape. Stiller contacted the Allied Commission in Bolzano or Bozen (the capital of Alto Adige) that was working on the transition between German and Allied control of northern Italy. He asked about lodging anywhere in the province for the large group of prisoners and guards. Stiller was particularly interested in fitting everyone into a single building to facilitate control of the notables. Nothing was available on short notice, so they all had to make the best of it in Villabassa for the moment. The mayor was very cooperative; the villagers took pity on the wretched-looking travelers in an odd assortment of old clothes and prison uniforms. In the evening the *Prominenten* were billeted at the stately town hall (where the empty first floor was covered with straw for them) and at the half-timbered Hotel Bachmann (where mattresses were spread on the floor of the salon after all the rooms were taken). Hostages were also lodged at several smaller inns, private homes, and at the large rectory. Fr. Josep Brugger, the pastor of the parish, Santo Stefano, hosted the four Catholic clergymen (the bishop, the canon, and two German priests), as well as a few of the prisoners of kin, and one guard.

The first night Piguet locked himself in his room at the rectory. A few of the prisoners organized watches for fear of an attempt to shoot or blow up the

POWs in their sleep. Indeed, the SS and Gestapo guards planned to execute some of the captives the following day, Sunday, April 29, or at the latest, on the 30th.¹⁶⁰ Bader was determined to carry out the orders of execution he and Stiller had in their pockets. Fortunately, a German colonel in his impressive army uniform, was able to intimidate someone in the area to allow him to call the Wehrmacht headquarters in Bolzano and explain the situation.¹⁶¹ He was promised help. The leaders of the German army and diplomatic corps in Italy would not want a massacre of illustrious people when they were negotiating their surrender to the Allies. That same day, after a special Mass for the group at the white onion-domed church, the deportees gathered at Hotel Bachman for a meeting. They were astonished to watch Stiller climb on a chair, and then nod in agreement while others did the talking. The *Prominenten* were dumbfounded to hear they were no longer prisoners of the SS. The weary and scared notables were told the Wehrmacht was about to take them under its protection and the provincial government welcomed them as guests.

In the evening a few of the dazed semi-free hostages were moved around. One was the sixty-year-old former mayor of Vienna, Dr. Richard Schmitz, who had spent the previous night on the floor in the town hall. The pious politician was assigned to a room with Xavier at the Ebner Cafe, across the square from the municipal building. The two men may have had more to talk about than their present circumstances and prospects or previous camp experience at Dachau. They both had studied at Stella Matutina and probably coincided for a few years. The prince's roommate for a night wrote in his diary that he was quite emotional when he encountered two normal beds. After seven and a half years of sleeping in dormitories with 150-200 people sharing bunks built for fifty-two, he was truly delighted with a bed of his own, linen as white as snow, a pillow, and a folded clean towel.¹⁶²

The next morning, April 30, the guards from the concentration camps were replaced by a detachment of soldiers from the Wehrmacht on duty at a nearby village named Sesto or Sexten. The troops deployed to Villabassa got there just in time. Their commander was Captain Wichard von Alvensleben, a gracious aristocrat and pious Evangelical Christian. Alvensleben was able to avoid a shoot-out in the town square between men from the Wehrmacht, the SS, and

160 For the orders to kill some, or all, of the hostages, see VERHMEHREN, *op. cit.*, 188, see SCHUSCHNIGG, *op. cit.*, 188; see PIGUET, *op. cit.*, 165; see BEST, *op. cit.*, 230-231; see HASSELL, *op. cit.*, 206 and 209. Also see Léon BLUM, *Mémoires. La prison et le procès: A l'échelle humaine*. Introduction by S[amuel] Spanien, vol. 5 of *L'Oeuvre de Léon Blum* (Paris: Editions Albin Michel, 5 vols.), 541.

161 Colonel Bogislaw Oskar von Bonin. He had been arrested in Jan. of 1945 for disobeying direct orders from Hitler. Bogislaw had allowed his troops in Poland to retreat from Warsaw during the Soviet Vistula-Oder Offensive rather than fight until death.

162 RICHARDI, *op. cit.*, references the diary of R. Schmitz, who had been imprisoned at Dachau since 1938.

the Gestapo. He also disarmed most of the guards and cajoled them to leave. Alvensleben treated the company of notables with respect and reassured them that they were under his protection. Discipline was relaxed. Everyone knew the war in Europe was almost over. On April 29, the first troops from the US 7th Army had reached Dachau.

The colonel who managed to call the Wehrmacht headquarters was one of four or five men in the group who had taken initiatives on behalf of all the prisoners as soon as they arrived in Villabassa. They were the ones who organized the night watches, negotiated with Stiller, and convinced the SS guards to allow them to talk to the town's officials and to liaise with the Italian Partisans. Xavier de Bourbon, the colonel of the Belgian army, does not appear in the memoirs published by *Prominenten* as one of these proactive men. The prince who could hardly stand a few days earlier was probably still too weak to provide any kind of leadership. However, his presence was noted. At the meeting of captives in the hotel someone in the group proposed that he be included in a little committee the pro-active hostages put together to look after the group's wellbeing. The stated idea was that Xavier safeguard the interests of France and the French members of the party.¹⁶³

The final destination of the *Prominenten* while they were in German hands was an isolated hotel on the shore of Lake Prags, in the Dolomite Mountains. Arrangements were made by Anton Ducia, an engineer from the Allied Commission in Bolzano. He was in charge of finding shelter for soldiers and displaced civilians. Today the beautiful area covered in pine trees where he took the semi-free group is a nature reserve, and the resort hotel is still in operation.¹⁶⁴ On April 30, 1945, remembered in history because Adolph Hitler took his life that afternoon, many of the malnourished prisoners trudged uphill in the snow for the last hour and a half of their journey. Overloaded buses had trouble on the steep and icy road. The large seasonal hotel, located well over 4,000 feet above sea level, had been closed during the war,¹⁶⁵ the heating system was out of order, and the pantry was bare. However, the hotel's owner, Emma Heiss-Hellenstainer, rose to the occasion. She managed to round up some of her old staff and ordered food from Villabassa and other places. Former prisoners volunteered for kitchen duty, distributed baskets of firewood to the rooms that had stoves or chimneys, and handed out linen. There were enough rooms for all the notables to enjoy privacy, a comfortable bed with an eiderdown, and

¹⁶³ BEST, *op. cit.*, 236.

¹⁶⁴ Located forty-three miles from Bolzano, the establishment where the prisoners stayed, called Hotel Lago di Braies in Italian and Prager Wildsee Hotel in German, has a multilingual website: Hotel Prager Wildsee/Lago di Braies. Accessed in April, May, and Aug. 2018.

¹⁶⁵ Three German Wehrmacht generals and their staff had commandeered the empty building and were camping out at the freezing hotel. Ducia found another place for them.

a soothing winter-white view. Prince Xavier was assigned to room 318. Dr. Schmidt was a few feet away in 321.¹⁶⁶

The erstwhile captives were allowed to roam freely, but Alvensleben posted sentries around the property. He warned the former hostages against straying far from the hotel, and cautioned them to be wary of armed men prowling in the countryside during the chaotic last days of the Second World War. Additionally, he reminded them that the SS still had garrisons in Alto Adige and might try to recapture them.¹⁶⁷ Instead, on May 1, the head of the Gestapo at the nearby border town of Sillian (Tyrol, Austria) received written orders from his superiors in Klagenfurt (Carinthia, Austria) to gather all the notables with the help of the local police. He disobeyed.¹⁶⁸ However, other people showed up at the hotel, including a few young men waving guns and sporting the red neckerchiefs of many Italian Partisans. The freedom fighters had to be intimidated into leaving.

Hotel Lago di Braies has its own little chapel, topped by a steeple with a bell, a few hundred feet from the main building. Bishop Piguët wasted no time before starting religious services. Marian hymns for the month of May and four Masses daily were attended by Christians of various denominations. Vespers at 5:00 p.m. included a sermon given by a German priest who had worked with Xavier for a while on the Plantation at Dachau.¹⁶⁹ There was also, at least, one Protestant service in the chapel. The hotelier, Emma Heiss-Hellenstainer, recalled years later that “Prince Xavier de Bourbon” and a red-headed Irishman served many of the Masses as acolytes. She mentioned the large red mark on the back of the prince’s jacket that denoted his classification within the Nazi detainee system.¹⁷⁰ Xavier’s movements may have been a bit slow or shaky, but he knew the rubrics of the Mass and the Latin responses as well as the clergy.

Deliverance came on Friday, May 4, two days after the German forces in Italy officially surrendered. While the bishop was finishing his Mass, a detachment of 170 American infantrymen arrived. They belonged to a regiment in the 85th division of the US 5th Army that had made its way north along the Italian Peninsula. The company was commanded by Captain John Athwell and was mainly composed of young soldiers who had not been in Europe very long. A spokesman for the hostages put in a good word for Captain Alvensleben, and he was allowed to keep his pistol. The other German soldiers were disarmed,

¹⁶⁶ RICHARDI, *op. cit.*, 229.

¹⁶⁷ BEST, *op. cit.*, 242, and RICHARDI, *op. cit.*, 229.

¹⁶⁸ RICHARDI, *op. cit.*, 237-239. The Gestapo commander at Sillian was named Hans Philipp. He committed suicide on May 4.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 230-231. The priest was Dr. Anton Hamm, a former military chaplain from the diocese of Aachen or Aix-la-Chapelle (Cologne).

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 227, quoting Emma Heiss-Hellenstainer’s unpublished memoir of the stay of the *Prominenten* at her hotel on Lake Prags.

and some of the Americans drove them away. The rest of the friendly and gum-chewing liberators at the hotel distributed chocolate and cigarettes before unloading their supply trucks that contained canned food, medicine, and clothes. A physician and a dentist followed shortly. A few days later, an American general, Leonard T. Gerow, arrived to prepare for the evacuation of the former hostages. He announced that they were under American protection and would be taken south, to the Allied Mediterranean headquarters in Naples. Gerow explained that communication with the north had been interrupted.

International reporters and photojournalists arrived at Lake Prags. The unusual story of the VIP hostages who resurfaced after a long time was front-page news on May 8, 1945.¹⁷¹ Many newspapers included a list of the survivors. In some Xavier was identified as Empress Zita's brother and in a few as the Carlist Pretender to the Spanish Throne.

The *Prominenten* included a handful of Italians. Four of the men convinced Alvensleben to allow them to stay behind at Villabassa. They collaborated with the Partisans.¹⁷² One young Russian officer, who was a nephew of the Soviet Foreign Minister, Vyacheslav Molotov, left the hotel at the lake on foot, struck out on his own, and died a few weeks later of festering wounds acquired in the freezing mountains.¹⁷³ The rest of the group appear to have survived their ordeal together. Prince Xavier's companions, besides the bishop, the canon from Munich, the two German priests, the former mayor of Vienna, the Wehrmacht colonel, and the two German women who were prisoners of kin, included: Dr. Kurt Schuschnigg, ex-Chancellor of Austria,¹⁷⁴ Miklós Kállay, former Prime Minister of Hungary, and Lieutenant General Alexandros Papagos, ex-Commander-in-Chief of the Greek Army. Reverend Martin Niemöller, a beloved German Protestant leader, and Sigismund Payne Best and Richard Henry Ste-

171 See also "Defeat and Deliverance," British Pathé News, a newsreel released on May 21, 1945. Accessed online at You Tube in June, Aug, and Oct. 2018.

172 The most prominent was General Sante Garibaldi, a relative of the nineteenth-century revolutionary soldier-of-fortune Giuseppe Garibaldi.

173 Wasili Kokorin, a Russian army lieutenant, was afraid the Allies would hand him over to Russian authorities and he would be shot by his compatriots for having failed in his mission. He had parachuted into Nazi territory in April of 1942 and been caught. Kokorin's feet nearly froze before he was taken to a concentration camp, where he encountered his old friend Joseph Stalin's son Jakov, who was also a prisoner. Kokorin left the hotel at Lake Prags on foot, was picked up by some Italian Partisans, and shared their misadventures for a few weeks. The *Prominenten* did not know that he decided, after all, to go home and tell Stalin, with whom he was personally close, about his son's gruesome death, or that he wrote to the Russian embassy to ask for help. Kokorin, whose feet were covered in sores, was more or less abandoned in a hut in the mountains of Alto Adige, and died shortly thereafter. See BEST, *op. cit.*, 218 and 243-245, and RICHARDI, *op. cit.*, 23-25 and 246-248. Another Russian officer may have slipped away. See BEST, *op. cit.*, 247.

174 Interestingly, Schuschnigg, like Prince Xavier and Schmitz, was an alumnus of Stella Matutina, the Jesuit school in Feldkirch.

vens, two famous agents of the British Secret Intelligence Service, were part of the group.¹⁷⁵ There were also five generals in uniforms covered in decorations: four Greeks and Alexander Ernst von Falkenhausen, German military governor of Luxembourg and Belgium at the beginning of the War. Germans also included two princes¹⁷⁶ and the former director of Germany's national bank. Close to a third of the prisoners of kin were close relatives of the Stauffenberg brothers who had led the July 20 plot against the Führer in 1944.¹⁷⁷

One of the best known members of the *Prominenten* was Léon Blum, the first socialist and first Jewish prime minister of France. He had served twice in that capacity in Popular Front governments of the 1930s. The French politician spent several years in confinement at Buchenwald Concentration Camp, near Weimar, Germany, and was kept in much more relaxed conditions than most of the inmates. The elderly Blum, who was in poor health, was dressed nicely and walked with a cane. He impressed many distinguished prisoners by his interesting observations, dignified demeanor, and modesty. The devout Catholic and conservative Schuschnigg was most complementary in *Austrian Requiem*, the book he published shortly after the War.¹⁷⁸

During their odyssey, the sophisticated people from many countries and cultures who held different beliefs and had varying world-views went out of their way to be considerate to one another. They emphasized what they had in common. Nonetheless, the Carlist Regent could not have helped but recall to himself scenes from July of 1936. Less than a week after he signed the order for the Carlist militias to rise against the Second Spanish Republic and its Popular Front government, Blum arranged for planes and munitions to help subdue the insurgents south of the Pyrenees.¹⁷⁹ In his memoirs the agnostic Blum, who had very little sympathy for Christianity, for Carlism, or for ro-

175 They were both involved in the Venlo Incident in Nov. of 1939. The two British intelligence officers and a Dutch colleague were duped by the German secret service. In a sting operation in The Netherlands, a neutral country, the Englishmen were abducted and the Dutchman was killed. The event occurred in the parking lot of Cafe Backus, on the outskirts of Venlo (Limburg), just a few hundred feet from the German border. The incident was reported in the press, and the capture of the British spies was used in Nazi propaganda. Best emerged as the leader of the *Prominenten* once they arrived in Villabassa.

176 Frederick Leopold of Prussia and Philip of Hesse.

177 The brothers were Claus and Berthold Schrenk. Both held the title of Graf, or Count, Stauffenberg.

178 SCHUSCHNIGG, *op. cit.*, 282.

179 On July 20 the French administration of President Albert Lebrun (1932-1940) received a request for bomber planes and other war matériel from Azaña's government. Léon Blum and several other members of the French cabinet immediately worked out a plan for helping Spain's Popular Front rulers and ordered the first remittance to be sent, although it would be held up for several weeks for internal political reasons and diplomatic relations with Great Britain. For a clear summary of Blum's position toward Spain in the summer of 1936 see M. D. GALLAGHER, "Léon Blum and the Spanish Civil War," *Journal of Contemporary History* (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications), vol. 6, n. 3 (1971), 56-84. Also see Geoffrey WARNER, "France and Non-Intervention in Spain, July-August 1936," *International Affairs* (Royal Institute of International Affairs), 38, 2 (April 1), 1962, 203-220.

yalty, would pen a few complementary lines about Xavier. After meeting the prince at Reichenau and spending two surreal weeks together as part of the *Prominenten*, when Blum listed some of his companions, he wrote: "...Prince Xavier of Bourbon-Parma, whose sister was Empress of Austria, whose brother married a Princess from Italy, and from whom we will learn to love perfect simplicity and kindness."¹⁸⁰

The notables left Lake Prags in two relays, on the 8th and 10th of May. The American general, Gerow, supervised the evacuation. Xavier and the bishop were in the first contingent. They were taken in a long convoy of buses and jeeps. Armored cars led the van and brought up the rear. An escort of planes flew overhead. The group was driven down the mountains to Verona on a road full of craters and past bridges that had been destroyed a few days earlier by Allied air raids and by retreating Germans. Along the way the convoy stopped for a break at an open-air restaurant where tables laden with white bread and large containers of jam had been arranged for the big group. The former hostages were served coffee with plenty of hot milk and sugar. All these items had been scarce during the war in Germany, especially, in concentration camps. The *Prominenten* spent a night in Verona in the shadow of the Arena, the city's ancient Roman amphitheater. The eighty-five deportees were accommodated at a handsome old hotel, the Colomba d'Oro. Once again, they were treated to good food, which they appreciated. Their succulent celebratory dinner was topped off with ice cream for dessert, coffee, a post-prandial drink, and cigarettes. While in Verona, surely some members of the highly educated group that quoted Scripture, Homer, and Virgil to one another, gave a passing thought to *Romeo and Juliette*. The next day, the 11th, three American military planes flew the former POWs south to Naples, in Campania. The aircrafts cruised at a low altitude, and the passengers could see the Apennine Mountains, the Arno River meandering through Florence, the Colosseum and St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, the ruins of the Benedictine abbey at Monte Cassino, and the shimmering Bay of Naples. The *Prominenten* arrived at 11 a.m. They were greeted by women from the American Red Cross, who distributed little packages of toiletries and treats, and by American Military Police.¹⁸¹ At the airport the MPs split up the notables by nationality. The Germans, who were more than half the group, and the handful of Austrians were taken to Capri for questioning. Some would be arrested for their Nazi past.

A few hours before the erstwhile hostages landed in Naples, word went around the city that Germany had signed its last important surrender, in Berlin. Blum points out in his memoirs that the *Prominenten* deplaned at the

180 BLUM, *op. cit.*, 540. Blum's narrative of the *Prominenten*, starting in Dachau, is on 536-544.

181 VERMEHREN, *op. cit.*, 215-216, describes the scene at the airport in Naples.

moment the Allies in the area began their Victory Day celebrations. In the midst of ruins, the people of Naples and the Allied forces at their general Mediterranean headquarters were in a festive mood. The bishop mentions a string of jubilant diplomatic and military receptions. The former captives who lived in France were honored by the French diplomatic community. Piguet indicates in his book that the French ambassador to the Holy See visited them in Naples.¹⁸² Presumably Pius XII was relieved to receive a report about his friend Prince Xavier of Bourbon Parma and about the French bishop he had tried unsuccessfully to get released from Dachau. Piguet and Xavier were lodged in a nice hotel for four nights. They may have had a medical check-up at a hospital run at the time by the Americans in the hilly Vomero district of Naples.¹⁸³ On May 13, a Sunday, Xavier attended the bishop's Mass, along with a French journalist and a Swiss engineer who were part of their group. Then, at 8:00 a.m., the four men were flown to Paris on an English passenger plane. The next morning the prince and the bishop headed for central France together. They boarded a train full of displaced people and former deportees like themselves who were also on their way home.¹⁸⁴

HOMECOMING

Xavier's family awaited him at the railway station in Moulins (Allier). His children were excited, but had trouble recognizing him. The prince, still clad in his blue and grey striped prison uniform, was given a triumphant welcome at Bostz. The people of Besson, a village of 950 inhabitants, had joined the family and its staff to decorate the estate's park with French flags, to organize a country fête, and to ring the little bell on the rooftop of the house upon Xavier's arrival. Well wishers must have included a few survivors of the former Casanova band who were glad to visit their old campground to greet the prince who had treated them so well. The returning prisoner of war would be fifty-six in a few days. He had so little energy and was so shaky that he sat on the ground to talk to his family in the midst of the outdoor homecoming party. The sick and emaciated prince, who measured approximately five feet and six inches, weighed about eighty pounds (thirty-six kilograms). His withered face showed the signs of suffering. Xavier's head was shaven, and the fresh scar on the lower

182 Dr. Jacques Maritain, the well-known philosopher, represented General Charles de Gaulle's provisional government (1944-1946). He arrived in Rome in April of 1945, and presented his credentials to Pius XII on May 10.

183 BLUM, *op. cit.*, 544, mentions a check-up at Vomero's hospital, however, he was separated from Xavier and Piguet in Naples, where he enjoyed the hospitality of a French diplomat he knew well. Blum also returned to France on a different plane.

184 PIGUET, *op. cit.*, 171-174, for the stay in Naples and trip to Paris.

left side must have been obvious.¹⁸⁵ Francis Xavier of Bourbon Parma had aged considerably during his ten-month nightmare in the prison system of the Nationalist Socialist German Workers' Party.¹⁸⁶

EPILOGUE

The son of the last ruler of Parma lived many more years. Prince Xavier gradually returned to his devotions and charity work connected to the Orders of the Holy Sepulcher and St. Benedict. He was involved in many Catholic symposia and conferences throughout western Europe. Xavier resumed his discrete activities for Pius XII. He shared the Pope's concern about the spread of Communism, an anti-Christian, totalitarian, and socialist system as bad or worse than Nazism and Fascism.

During his convalescence after Dachau Xavier wrote an essay in political thought inspired by the counter-revolutionary views of his great-uncle Count Chambord, which was published in French in 1946. Over the years the Bourbon prince participated in royalist commemorations in France and published some short pieces on historical French regal topics.

Xavier visited Spain every so often for Carlist affairs, and Franco's government asked him to leave more than once. In 1952, five years after the general officially declared Spain to be a monarchy anew, Xavier reluctantly agreed to be the Traditionalist Claimant to the vacant throne.¹⁸⁷ Carlist leaders were convinced that a monarchist movement without a royal Claimant or King had few chances of success or even survival. The sixty-three-year-old Xavier, however, appears to have immediately regretted his decision. For some time he banned Spanish Traditionalists from publicizing his position as their Claimant or acting accordingly. One of the reasons for his ambivalence was fear of being uprooted. The stateless prince did not want to provoke the government of the French Fourth Republic into expelling him from France. When the hesitant Claimant was in his late seventies, he was drawn into unexpected political

185 Manuel MARTORELL, *op. cit.*, 361, mentions seeing a photograph of XBP with his head shaven that was distributed among Carlists soon after the prince returned home.

186 For XBP's homecoming see María Teresa in BORBÓN PARMA, CLEMENTE, and CUBERO SÁNCHEZ, *Don Javier*, 64-65; see BORBÓN PARMA, *Así fueron*, 80; and see Carlos Hugo in CLEMENTE, *Carlos Hugo*, 75-76. PIGUET, *op. cit.*, 173, also has a few lines about the stop at the train station in Moulins.

187 Many Carlists thought XBP had the three qualities they considered non-negotiable: legitimacy of origin, legitimacy of exercise, and, seemingly, the commitment to work hard as their Claimant. For a long time the prince had been bombarded with letters, position papers, and visits urging him to end the Regency and to take on the sovereign mantle. In the early '50s a popular book among Carlists was Fernando POLO, *¿Quién es el Rey? La actual sucesión dinástica en la Monarquía española*. This study of royal genealogy, law, and politics, first published in 1949, concluded that XBP had a right to be King of Spain.

positions by some of his children. In the following years much was done in his name. In 1975, shortly before his eighty-sixth birthday, he transferred his Spanish claims to his oldest son.

None of Xavier of Bourbon Parma's activities after the Second World War entailed conspiracies, gun-running, artillery, trenches, or undercover agents. Likewise, war, guerrilla bands, deportations, prisons, forced labor, physical violence, hunger, and clandestine surgery were part of the adventures and misadventures of the past. For the rest of his life the Francophile prince lived comfortably with his wife in the old Bourbonnais of central France, dividing his time between grand homes at Bostz and Lignières as well as an elegant flat in Paris. The former intrepid prince born in Italy became the head of his branch of the large Bourbon family in 1974. Like his father, he was known throughout Europe as the Duke of Parma. When the pious Benedictine oblate died in 1977 he was buried in the monastic complex at Solesmes.

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