

Mentors of Catholic Trade Unionism:
Pedro Gerard (1871–1919)
and José Gafo (1881–1936)

SALVADOR CARRASCO CALVO AND LUIS VILA-LÓPEZ

The two individuals presented in this chapter cover different periods of the twentieth century in Spain. The older, Gerard, survived almost into the dictatorship of General Primo de Rivera; the younger, Gafo, was prominent during the end of Alfonso XIII's reign, Rivera's dictatorship and the early years of the Second Spanish Republic.¹ Gerard and Gafo made an important Dominican contribution to the 'social question', since they lived varied forms of that problem from a believer's perspective. They were both mentors of a part of Catholic trade unionism. These figures of the Order, however, are representative of a wider group of people; we should not forget their brothers and sisters in their hundreds, as well as the many laypeople who attached themselves, for example, to congregations dedicated to social and educational action among the lower classes or who gave assistance to the defenceless poor.

If twentieth-century Spain has been eventful in the spheres of politics and economics, the Church experienced no less of a transformation during that century. Spanish Catholic thought has oscillated between a position of intransigence and short-sightedness when confronted with social changes, and a prophetic vanguard, though the second position was often held by a minority. All of this appears below in a condensed synthesis, although the projects through which the Spanish process of modernisation developed, and its parallels with other nations, will be dealt with here only in passing.

FR PEDRO GERARD: A BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Pedro Gerard was born in Saragossa on 27 November 1871 and died in Madrid on 2 February 1919. He took the habit in 1886 and was ordained priest in 1895. He completed his degree in physics at the University of Barcelona and dedicated himself from that moment to teaching and preaching. With the restoration of the Dominican Province of Bética (Andalusia) he was sent to the Dominican house in Jerez de la Frontera (in the province of Cádiz), where