

REX ( Leon Degrelle)

... was the leader of all Catholic  
... had no other ambition than to  
... of young apostles in the service of  
... Seeing these youngsters rise caused him immense  
joy, and detecting the one or the other's exceptional  
qualities filled him with hope.

In 1927 Mgr. Picard met in Louvain a young student who  
was later to become one of Belgium's main political pre-war  
figures. This youngster who was actively involved in  
local student activities <sup>and</sup> participated in numerous reunions  
where his leadership qualities stood out. Originally from  
Bouillon, he was the son of a political figure in the  
province of Luxembourg, <sup>a figure who</sup> ~~was~~ <sup>became</sup> at that time <sup>a</sup> member of  
of the permanent deputation. His family originally came  
from Solre-le-Château in the French Hainaut. He completed  
his humanities studies at N.D. de la Paix College in Namur;  
and continued for another year at the Faculty with courses  
in literature and Philosophy. At the time the young man  
met Mgr. Picard he was a law student. His name was Leon  
Degrelle.

Mgr. Picard took notice of this young man who had unusual  
rhetorical powers and a fluent pen. He asked him to  
participate in the Catholic publication "Cahiers;" and a  
few months later, in November 1927, the name of Leon Degrelle  
figured prominently in the editor's committee. ~~His~~

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In the beginning he published some of his poems and -2- signed literary articles about the chansonnier Botrel and the Ardenese poet, Louis Boumal.

Leon Degrelle rapidly became a familiar figure in the ACJB House. His cordial and flexible manner, sharp sense of humor and explosive laughter made him instantly liked in surroundings where sincerity and frankness were appreciated. That was the time <sup>when</sup> Leon Degrelle still <sup>possessed</sup> these qualities. Mgr. Picard, who <sup>also</sup> savoured humor and irony became more and more interested in this young man. ~~He was touched by the confidence that this student~~

This young student, who differed from so many of the student world, by embracing the ideals of the ACJB, touched him with his confidence.

THE INSTRUMENT  
REX EDITIONS ~~\*-SERVICE OF THE CATHOLIC ACTION~~

In the <sup>last</sup> years, the main office <sup>See page 10</sup> of the Catholic ACTION multiplied its publications. Their publishing houses <sup>progressively</sup> edited ~~regularly~~ the Pope's encyclical letters. Besides these propaganda brochures, extracts for the ACJB campaigns and sometimes a book were printed.

~~This activity was coordinated into a special~~  
~~editions, whose direction was undertaken by the Abbe~~  
~~Gribomont, one of Mgr. Picard's permanent collaborators.~~  
~~The Rex Editions were founded~~ Together  
~~with the founding of the Rex Editions,~~ the  
~~offer~~ Dux ~~Agency~~ service  
~~was also established to~~ a travel ~~agency~~, particularly  
for youth pilgrimages. Such branches ~~of~~ activities were  
developed in the hope of stimulating a youth expansion  
and nourishing it regularly with  
material resources.

On January 2, 1931 the Rex Editions became a cooperative society with a capital of 50,000 francs in subscriptions. <sup>This money was donated in</sup> given by various people ~~in~~ Mgr. Picard's circle. One of <sup>these</sup> ~~these~~ Degrelle <sup>family</sup> and ~~his~~ father. From that moment on, the actual direction of the service was assumed by Leon Degrelle.

In 1931, the <sup>heliogravure</sup> illustrated magazine "Soirees" was one of the publications <sup>held by</sup> the main office of the Catholic ACTION. This publication <sup>had to</sup> answered the need <sup>of</sup> to ~~open~~ the Catholic public <sup>and offer some</sup> recreational though clearly Christian literature, while possessing a <sup>fresh</sup> and livelier attraction than the existing weeklies. <sup>Through "Soirees"</sup> Radio Catholique, and film productions, under the direction of <sup>cannot</sup> chanoine Brohee, were given additional means to enlighten and guide <sup>the</sup> families.

The editorship of Soirees was given to Leon Degrelle.

~~\*\*\*\*the\*\*\*\*head\*\*\*\*of\*\*\*\*the\*\*\*\*editions\*\*\*\*service\*\*\*\*and\*\*\*\*the\*\*\*\*review\*\*\*\*~~

'Head of an editions' service and a review for a considerably large public, Leon Degrelle affirmed himself more and more each day. Under his stimulation, brochures appeared one after the other, nourishing the ACJB action campaigns as well as others. He was obviously a lanceur in the grand style.

The editor in him did not suppress the writer. The success of Soirees was due in large part to his articles, <sup>moreover,</sup> which he began to distribute <sup>almost</sup> ~~but~~ everywhere. His pen was more than alert - it was brisk, satirical and heady. Powerful as a steam-hammer, <sup>his</sup> ~~the~~ vehement prose bristled with striking verbs, <sup>projected</sup> and surprising epithets, and flooded the short, nervous paragraphs with phrases forged with such punch that they engraved themselves violently in one's memory. <sup>Such</sup> ~~This~~ literature scattered a burst of pearls under the ax.

Charged with moving images, the effusions of Leon Degrelle ~~were\*\*\*\*of\*\*\*\*poetical\*\*\*\*nature\*\*\*\*~~, but the poem, far from appeasing with a cradles' charm had more of the jolting effect of a bomb. His tense and breathless discourses <sup>lived</sup> ~~creaked~~ with elementary emotions in their natural state: ~~\*\*\*\*the\*\*\*\*love\*\*\*\*of\*\*\*\*white\*\*\*\*fury\*\*\*\*heart\*\*\*\*rending\*\*\*\*anxiety\*\*\*\*and\*\*\*\*~~

(alike)

Ideas or ~~sublimations~~ - all were treated in the same expeditive fashion by this pen - or pick-ax. Leon Degrelle's ideas did not flow, they raged like a torrent sweeping away all obstacles.

Such a style could only please a world which detested <sup>(standards:alogans formulas)</sup> ~~\*\*\*\*the\*\*\*\*style\*\*\*\*~~ used clichés and sleek, ~~saug~~ phrases), and which could no longer stomach artifice ~~of~~ insincerity. <sup>naturally pure</sup> ~~of~~ These ~~\*\*\*\*the\*\*\*\*~~ expansions attracted especially the <sup>young</sup> ~~\*\*\*\*the\*\*\*\*~~. This muscular fashion of <sup>facing</sup> ~~affronting~~ things, this unequalled <sup>of</sup> ~~aplomb~~ <sup>approaching</sup> affirmation, this infectious faith in the initial simplicity of all problems, made each article signed L.D. a flood of evidence and conviction. There was no need for subterfuge nor even reflection: all was said with such strength that there was no room <sup>left</sup> for discussion - that's how it was. This propensity and talent <sup>giving a jolt</sup> for ~~(jolting)~~ earned Leon Degrelle his first audience.

Now, the great ambition of Mgr. Picard was to give back to the Church its power of influence <sup>over</sup> ~~of~~ the masses, <sup>While</sup> ~~\*\*\*\*preached\*\*\*\*~~ through the intervention of active Christians. <sup>ing</sup> ~~\*\*\*\*preached\*\*\*\*~~ <sup>for</sup> ~~\*\*\*\*preached\*\*\*\*~~ unceasingly ~~of~~ enlightenment <sup>and</sup> ~~\*\*\*\*preached\*\*\*\*~~ searching for a means to accomplish this end, he saw in Leon Degrelle ~~\*\*\*\*preached\*\*\*\*~~

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...and expansion of  
...for this moment on,  
...simple  
...stopped considering Degrelle as a star of  
...life) under the additional influence of a  
...personal liking for this young man, Mgr. Picard undertook  
it upon himself to push him resolutely forward upon  
the great scene of life, ~~where~~ where definitive influences  
are exercised.

#### EMANCIPATION -

Having always had immense confidence in himself,  
(better)  
Leon Degrelle could not ask for more. His childhood and  
were witnesses  
school friends ~~\*\*\*\*\*~~. As small as he was, he  
had astonished his circle with an unusual dosage of "amour-  
propre." He felt stirring within him the famous "demon"  
which the ancients recognized as inhabiting strong  
personalities, and time after time he would (confess to )  
of  
his friends the interior pressure which tormented him.  
His need to write surpassed the simple desire for self-  
expression, having as <sup>a</sup> goal <sup>the</sup> persuasion and influence <sup>of</sup>  
others. Conscious of his inner powers, he lauded himself  
in his own eyes, and saw himself as a being apart, destined  
for greatness.

It must also be said that in his undertakings he did  
not easily accept the sharing of authority, a fact which

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Secretary of

perceived which Main office  
was soon (noticed) in the departments of the ~~\*\*\*\*\*~~  
of the Catholic Action ~~\*\*\*\*\*~~  
~~\*\*\*\*\*~~ had placed under his direction.  
He did not like to give accounts and he hated to be checked;  
he had to act " in his own way ." Little by little the  
tension mounted in the constituent publication of the Rex  
Editions. ~~\*\*\*\*\*~~ the network of his responsibility towards  
society the director constantly evaded; editions were  
engaged before being admitted, ~~\*\*\*\*\*~~ were unforeseen and peri-  
llous initiatives <sup>were</sup> taken, and intangible, undefinable programs  
were launched, emanating from spur-of-the-moment impressions,  
making life difficult for those he had the task of control-  
ling him. " Have faith in me, " would grumble (Degrelle)  
~~\*\*\*\*\*~~ to his supervisors, when reproached.

It soon became evident that it would be impossible  
to hold him in rein, and in 1932 a new ~~fact~~ <sup>event</sup> added to this  
disturbing fact. Leon Degrelle took a considerable part in  
the electoral <sup>campaign</sup> (propaganda) of the Catholic party. Under the  
aegis of Rex Editions, a flood of tracts and pamphlets  
appeared everywhere. Degrelle considered himself, not  
without a certain pride, as <sup>invigorating</sup> the forger of a new party upsurge <sup>(renovation)</sup>  
Up to now, Rex Editions had been connected to the Main

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~~Necessity~~ This apparent collusion into which the Main Office had been placed naturally gave cause to uneasiness. Before the end of 1932, it was decided to <sup>give</sup> ~~entrust~~ Leon Degrelle the main responsibility of the Rex Editions, by according him, as ~~he~~ <sup>he</sup> wished, the majority of social <sup>obligations</sup> parts. Nevertheless, it was understood that a moral support would be reserved to the society, and that Mgr. Picard would continue to assume the control of manuscripts which Rex intended to publish. The ACJB would not establish ~~(set of editions?)~~ another publishing house, and Rex would be the ones to eventually publish their works.

This turn of events was important. By this concession Mgr. Picard and all the works dependent on him renounced <sup>for a long time</sup> the ownership of their own edition service, which had <sup>such a</sup> <sup>(obliged)</sup> seemed <sup>necessity</sup> to them. By remaining morally tied to Rex, the works extended a solidarity vis-a-vis the ~~three~~ <sup>whose</sup> immediate control escaped them. This was an awkward <sup>whose</sup> solution <sup>disadvantages</sup> would soon be felt.

As time progressed, Degrelle took greater and greater advantage of his ~~new~~ freedom. On October 1, 1932, a monthly literary magazine of 16 pages was published, as a supplement to "Soirées." It was called REX, and its subtitle read: "So that the Catholics read." <sup>On the</sup> <sup>The</sup> <sup>has a greeting from Mgr. Picard - addressed</sup> <sup>to Rex Editions:</sup> first page ~~of Rex Editions~~

~~had~~ had for a year successfully diffused some ~~valuable~~ <sup>valuable</sup> literature now ~~with~~ <sup>with</sup> a million copies and ~~had~~ <sup>had</sup> been worthy of the Church, the country, and the Catholic Action. <sup>(experienced apparitions?)</sup> Shortly after, Beursing made his appearances, which Degrelle reported on in several pamphlets, ~~written with~~ of such lifelike intensity that they had enormous success.

But the Rex newspaper no longer sufficed. Emboldened by the success of his 1932 campaign, Degrelle created a bi-monthly political organ, with the promising title of: "Vlan," whose declared intentions were, "Rex, ~~it~~ <sup>it</sup> reads, is before everything a movement, an organism of combat. In a few years, we would like to conquer all the fortresses of the land, bastion by bastion, rampart by rampart..." (Rex, February 25). "Vlan" appeared on February 4, 1933, <sup>dress</sup> in combat uniform (battle dress). Under the title "Let's go," <sup>the</sup> <sup>was launched</sup> ~~launched~~ that paper like a clarion sounding the charge.

"The State, he wrote, has lost all sense of pride and strength because the parties are cringing, decrepid, satisfied with compromises, shady deals, and full of hot air. There is blundering everywhere, and one prepares for disasters. Are our men going to follow that mess through their fawning weakness? No, no, and no... They want to re-establish, rightfully, discipline, courage, and organization. In order to achieve this, they will use all their strength and act with absolute sincerity,

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letting no one intimidate them."

Thus, a new tone and attitude. From a simple party publicity agent (propagandist), having his own paper,

Degrelle suddenly became judge and jury. Was it a question of program? No, for programs did not interest this reformer.

off  
"What's the good of sounding one's horn in windy tirades?... Words, projects, programs, it's a joke. What our country needs is to raise strong, rough men, visionary and creative. We are perishing, not through lack of doctrine... but through lack of indomitable temperaments... Instead of blundering fakers the country needs men of action.... "men." We will look for these men, we will find them, and we will make them. That is our program." (Vlan, # 2, Feb.18).

Such a discourse is most seductive for the elector infused with vigor rather than with clarity; it tempts and agitates an idealistic youth. It is quite excusable to miss the full impact of its meaning; who could have measured it? Would Leon Degrelle be capable of discerning the pathways along which the voices of his inner "demon" would lead him?

examination  
When the conclusions of Rex's ~~examination~~ of the Catholic party appeared, on April 29, the position became a bit clearer. The four questions posed became grievances. It was a "clear condemnation."

the party needs a financial organiza-  
tion, technicians, tribunals, a leader...  
"Don't look far; we will put him in  
charge." Let's spread upon it our network  
of permanent, our brochures, and all our  
papers from Rex, which already has 250,000  
to 30,000 persons. Let's put our staff and  
our soldiers at the party's disposition.  
They will become indispensable. Instead of  
fighting the Catholic Party, let's serve it."

Thus the action was to come from the inside, but in any case, Rex was determined to act.

#### FRICIONS AND ANXIETIES -

Many people at the Catholic  
the Main Office of Action, were astonished.  
Rex had ~~quickly~~ <sup>rapidly</sup> changed face. From an editing house,  
not even totally emancipated, Rex had <sup>transformed</sup> ~~changed~~ into an active  
political action enterprise. Rex frankly declared being  
a movement of opinion, and in a big announcement in  
Degrelle's offices, its purposes were clearly defined,  
on June 1, 1933:

"Rex is: 1. a youth movement; 2. a movement of the Catholic Action.-- Rex wants to give back to the Catholics a sense of pride, optimism, intrepidity, and the discipline of an organized action; 2. project into all modern life an ardent, intelligent, and integral Catholicism. -- Rex is characterized by: its élan, its dynamism, its faith, its sense of action; 2. its apostolique intransigency, its mysticism, its unity; 3. its commercial and financial organization, operated strictly as a workshop (factory) enterprise; 4. its audacious objective: all modern life-screen, radio, press, and today's souls - Rex gives itself to: 1. Belgium - to invigorate

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renovated  
its blood, thanks to a unified Catholicism;  
2. to Christ - Christus Rex, consecrating in  
him the joined efforts of his soldiers and  
apostles."

That at least, were its intentions, or its pretensions.  
Such a program cannot but inspire confidence. On the  
28 of March, the magazine "Soirees" was given to Rex.  
In August, a special edition of "Soirees" sketched Rex's  
first plan of action, and declared its new projects.  
One could also remark that the period of brochures and  
pamphlets, which characterized the beginnings of that  
action was over, giving place to books which were to  
teach the people as well as the cultivated public to read.

Through the "Collection nationale" books were introduced  
and sold by great numbers; the "Les Rois" series reserved  
works of great European writers for an elite; the  
"Collection politique", published under the auspices of the  
Federations of Associations and the Catholic Circles,  
revised at the same time, some fundamental positions.  
That wasn't all; there was a future promise of Flemish  
translations, a childrens' collection, and a religious  
series, "The Living Faith." Even with Rex, Vlan, and  
Soirees, the range of Rex's newspapers was not yet  
complete: a recreational journal for families would soon  
appear, entitled "Foyer" (The Home), and then an enlighten-  
ing religious publication, "Crois" (Believe). For the  
moment, the ambitions of Rex were ~~unlimited~~ there...

All this remained in the moral orbit of the Catholic  
Action, which was even pleased with it. Rex's emblem,  
on the front of the newspaper, consisted of a front-  
faced crown with a cross above it. His press was not  
lacking in declarations of devotion to the King,  
Christ the King, the Virgin Mary, the Holy Spirit,  
the Eucharist and the Sacraments.

control, at least theoretically, this incalculable  
flow of publications. "The Bouillonnais Leon Degrelle is  
the fresh and ardent soul of this movement," writes a  
commentator, "He is the promoter and the motor, the  
good herald and <sup>the</sup> infectious and joyous young leader,  
and it is Mgr. Picard who is the counsellor, the chaplain,  
and the "supporter" ("mainteneur)."

Practically speaking, this situation was sometimes rather  
uncomfortable for the "tutor;" Even though the reins were  
lightly held by an indulgent hand, the "fledgling", as one  
liked to call him, was constantly embarking on wild  
gambols. Mgr. Picard received warnings from many sides.  
It was strange to find this sudden flourishing of so  
many newspapers and books, when the Catholic editions had  
always held themselves on a rather modest footing. Was  
Rex going to devour in a few mouthfuls all the old  
houses, whose unexpected competitor he suddenly became?  
Or would this spectacular success burn with a momentary  
flame only to be reduced to cinders and ashes, or in  
judiciary language: suits and bankruptcy? Degrelle was  
already regarded by some as a literary adventurer and a hare-  
brained, madcap youth. To those who warned him against  
Degrelle, Mgr. Picard's defense was, "It is true that  
Leon may go overboard in treating venerable subjects and

respectable people, but that's his temperament. But I want you to tell me if we have ever found such a militant - a true one? You know his age. Let him sow his wild oats." Sometimes, when pushed too far, one would witness Mgr. Picard flaming with indignation at the very thought that the affair would come out badly.

The ACJB shared these feelings. In Rex, it saw the providential instrument through which the ideal of the Catholic action would finally penetrate into profane realities, and would revitalize all of society. "All literary life..." proclaimed Rex's sub-title. "All political life..." said Vlan. Degrelle was the messenger of truth whose fiery rhetoric was charged with words of salvation. A great number of priests and a wave of youth, especially from the student milieu, already adhered with faith to this redefined ideal, so much more captivating now that it was summed up in such picturesque and prestigious language.

Nevertheless, the organized movement of the ACJB was no to be led blindly into this venture. Degrelle had never been a part of its staff, nor did he insist in becoming part of it. Did he unconsciously feel that the Catholic action discipline, directly subordinate to the ecclesiastic authority would act as a shackle? The ACJB had not exercise any power of Rex, whose ties were only with

of the Catholic Action. This Rex on integral path of the ACJB. The official youth movement, whose methods became stricter since specialization, watched with great apprehension the growth of another youth movement at its side, perfectly free, and rallying to its cause all youth without distinction of condition or origine. The J.O.C. who felt the assault against the institutions instinctively adhered to by the workers world, the J.A.C, and others became on the defensive.

#### TENSIONS AND AGGRESSIONS -

Under such conditions, frictions were inevitable. Here was Rex, raising its voice against "Nation Belge," a daily, officially neutral but having many Catholics among its readers. Rex accused "Nation Belge" of a systematic hostility against everything Catholic. Incited by this accusation, Nation Belge retaliated by taking to task Mgr. Picard, Rex's moral guaranty, who had just finished collaborating with this newspaper. Mgr. Picard answered with the statement that he had recently asked the administrative council of the Rex Editions cooperative to accept his resignation as president, a post which he had accepted only on a provisional basis, to facilitate transactions. "This resignation however, does not imply that I withdraw my collaboration and friendly support of Rex Editions," he added. This statement was noted with regret, by Nation (December 12, 1933). To avoid further misunderstanding, Mgr. Picard wrote to Nation a second time, this time giving homage to the newspaper "which had always treated Catholicism with the highest honor and esteem," and also to clarify the nature of his actual relations with Rex:

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" The patronage which I have conserved of Rex since that company became legally distinct from the Main Office of the Catholic Action no longer entails, in fact, the previous censure of its enourmous production. I contented myself with advice of a general nature, and with occasional remarks. If this formula proves to be inadequate or perilous upon its experience, it is not ~~unreasonable~~ unmeanable."

By this statement, Mgr. Picard sought to prove that his intervention in the Nation incident would not have been inefficacious(ineffective).

But there were worse things to come. Vlan launched into an odious attack against the ex-minister Henri Jaspar... Degrelle's aggressive attitude ~~increasingly~~ increasingly ~~disoriented~~ disoriented and confused the minds of his readers, his press became more and more involved in political battles, and the advice of his moral counsellor was less and less ~~adhered to~~ adhered to.(I know, Cheri, ending a sentence with a preposition is a cardinal sin in elementary English composition - am I doomed to a grammatical hell?)  
The final blow came on December 22, when the Main Office of the Catholic Action issued a summons to Rex, to modify its way of procedure.

"The Main Office of the Catholic Action, began the note, is forced to conclude to its intense regret, that the moral authority of Mgr. Picard has not been respected by Rex."

at a time in which they prevailed of his patronage. Mgr. Picard had formally witnessed the occurrence of several conflicts of this nature in the course of these last weeks, notably in a violent campaign with which the Main Office is declaredly dissociated.

"These defaults gravely emperil not only the interior discipline, but also the ~~good~~ reputation of the Catholic Action, as well as its imperative independence from political action. An editing house and its organizations which engage in such activities cannot pretend to have the ~~exclusive~~ privileged patronage of the Catholic Action and at the same time actively participate in political action, ~~especially~~ especially with the verve and vigor customary to Rex."

The question was thus placed on a matter of principle as well as contracts formally concluded.

On December 16, in unanimous agreement, voiced by the Commission of coordination of the ACJB, the Main Office asked Rex "to ~~henceforth~~ henceforth to faithfully respect all the injunctions made to ~~them~~ it by Mgr. Picard, and to separate itself from the political newspaper Vlan ."  
"Furthermore," the note added, " it should be understood that the ulterior collaboration of Mr. Leon Degrelle with political movements and publications could only engender the above-noted difficulties which we most emphatically wish to avoid." Rex was given until January 31 to execute these orders. If the ACJB did

not obtain satisfaction at the end of this period the lease would be cancelled in accordance with the agreement of the transfer of <sup>Rex</sup> shares to Mr. Degrelle, the episcopal authority would be fully informed of the conflict, the <sup>A</sup> and the Main Office would publish a decree that neither it nor any of its organizations are now in any way connected with Rex Editions.

This was the ultimatum, and there was great excitement at Rex. Eduard Degrelle hastened to assure Mgr. Picard that he would exert all his influence on his son to make him conform to orders. To Mgr. Picard he writes, "It is my personal opinion that it is better for Rex not to be a political machine, and that it should remain in unified action with your Main Office, thus merging <sup>k</sup> a complete union with the organisms of the Catholic Action." (December 31).

What will the chief of Rex do?... this man who never takes "no" for an answer? He seeks to parry the thrust. <sup>We</sup> ~~is~~, interested in politics? Have we done any more than other Catholic newspapers who print simultaneously religious and political articles?

"During months and months no one found this incompatible... All the trouble started in these last months, when we thought it our duty to lead a campaign which displeased the government..."

Do you not think it enough that Mgr. Picard has officially given his resignation as president of the Council, that he declared in the Nation Belge that he was not responsible for the articles in our newspapers, and that we ourselves inserted a crystal clear declaration on this subject in our newspapers this week?"

Furthermore, Degrelle challenged the Main Office's assertion of ever having had charge of the newspapers,

maintaining that their responsibility was limited to books. He announced that Rex and Vlan will publish an article according to which Rex Editions will ~~totally~~ <sup>total</sup> assume ~~the~~ responsibility of all its newspapers from now on. (January 3, 1934.).

Degrelle thus intended to have free rein in his political action. He rejected all of Mgr. Picard's control, without however rejecting ~~the~~ all Catholic Action patronage. He refused to bow to authority, even to the one who opened the way of success for him. This independence made the situation clear. That same day, a joint communiqué by the Main Office of the Catholic Action and the A.C.J.B was issued to the press, "to inform the public of their ~~the~~ dissociation with Rex Editions." This decision <sup>know</sup> was motivated by the <sup>know</sup> organic incompatibility, and furthered by the fact that the directive offices

approve of certain polemic processes recently

by Rex Editions.

On January 4, Mgr. Picard addressed a letter to His Eminence, the Cardinal van Roey, in which he informed him of the conflict:

"It is no longer possible for us to keep an attitude of hesitation and expectation, which we adopted at Vlan's creation, in order to avoid wronging an interesting and important movement of Catholic publication and publicity. Our prolonged silence actually created damaging confusions to the Catholic Action..." "In the beginning, Vlan had only been a newspaper of doctrine and information; this would still not have been incompatible with our patronage. We have since that time expressed the source of our anxieties to Mr. Degrelle."

Thus the patronage of the Catholic Action was withdrawn from Rex Editions. As for his personal relations with Rex, Mgr. Picard advised the Cardinal already that which he had announced to Nation Belge:

"We will do everything in our power to avoid a public display of polemics. As soon as the distinction is well established in the public's eyes, we will once more undertake an occasional collaboration which we have always given to Rex enterprises, and we will not cease, even now, to

to recommend to our Catholic readers that they help these generously these ebullient and well-intentioned apostles."

Thus, Mgr. Picard's position was not entirely clear.

A complete break seemed brutal to him, and such a gesture seemed unjustified in view of the "important services which Rex Editions rendered to the Catholic cause." (Communique of the ACJB). And further, would he have the strength to break with Degrelle, for whom he held the deepest friendship: The ambiguity of this personal attitude was to have grave consequences in prolonging the difficulty.

On January 13, Degrelle writes in Rex:

"Disagreement with the ACJB? How can one imagine such a thing: The ACJB was our youth... of all the Rexistes. We lived it. We served it for years. All the departments of Rex are directed by old militants of the ACJB, those who had the courage, those who wanted to consecrate their ideal, and sacrifice everything in order to place themselves in the service of an unceasing and exclusive apostleship.... They risked not only their youth but their bread. The 72 permanent staff members of Rex were coldly and voluntarily the actors in a heroic adventure. In a few years, they achieved, partially, but vigorously that which the ACJB dreamed of. After all that, how can one dream even for an instant, that there would be friction and a break between the ACJB and the leaders of Rex, everyone one of them a 100% acjibiste?"

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What then, according to him, had happened? It was simple:

"Rex was a movement which had developed in an atmosphere of astonishing dynamism, ~~and~~ served by the most precise ~~organization~~, and could not as of now hold itself to the concentrated and restrained program of the ACJB." What else are we doing but to ~~be~~ applying ~~the~~ Pope Pius' 1924 recommendation to canon Brohee:

"The solidly formed Christian should spread out beyond the life which he has received. He should distribute this treasure of Christianity everywhere, putting it to work in all domains; in family life, in public life, and in political life."

Politics, yes." One either becomes concerned with it, or one is strangled by it...."

"How many times were we sorry to see the ACJB keeping their youth away from politics...? We understood that these thousand of complaining friends were right, and that the time had come for the first group of men formed by the ACJB ~~to~~ take part in public life. We opened the flood-gates to give the country a rough and courageous army assembled under the Rex flag. And already behind us they are closing the gates ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~new~~ ~~levies~~ to shape the new levies in the hermetic confinement of the ACJB, the new levies who we hope will some day join us."

Having made this distinction however, our engaging in

politics

...not imply, as one imagines, that we intend to reduce our apostolic work. To the contrary, it is precisely this passion for Christ which enflames us and pushes us onward to new conquests. Just as before, and even more so, we follow our labor of love and faith, projecting into all ~~the~~ life God's light and the vibration of Catholicism. Never has an era had greater need of the comfort of the Cross. We will bring back the calm, serenity, and the light of Christ, into the morals, ~~the~~ ~~minds~~, and all that influences men and their homes. Our political activity will be an outgrowth of this, and its strategy moreover, will be entirely different, ~~clearly separating~~ national ~~interests~~ from apostolic ~~interests~~ interests... We want to eliminate from our country as soon as possible, all that stimulates religious conflicts, and ~~the~~ ~~poisons~~ religious atmosphere... Let the Catholics be saints, and let their sanctity shine forth; and the anti-clerics will cease to despise us..."

With such spirit, how could one not "reconstruct the country and revive the souls of men?"

"Belgium has need of a new spirit - she has need of men who do not come to power harrassed, sceptic, and defeated before the battle cry has sounded. Ten years from now, Belgium will have changed face in its material and moral structure. For this we need strong, rough men, with a clear ideal and a sense of action, adapted to our times and impregnated with the life of the people they will have to save. Our great red flags, emblazoned with the Crown of Christ will lead not only the conquests of hearts and souls, but in revitalizing the country by making men aware of charity and national duty."

This citation is long, but necessary. In this discourse, Leon Degrelle is to define in his sonorous and emotional language, the ideal which he will communicate to the masses: politics is not a business, it is a service, a devotion, a sacrifice; it is a great love. Rex is cited as an example of these Christian virtues in renovating the very idea of politics. All this thanks to the Catholic Action and the AQJB. And this was the source of mysticism which was to infect the masses. It would start with those incited by the enthusiasm of the youth congress, who under the intoxication of acclaiming Christ the King were waiting to be pushed into action by the emergence of a new prophet of the times. Degrelle ~~can~~ do without the support of the Catholic Action, for he ~~has~~ walked away with all its zeal ~~for~~; this was far better than a contract.

SEPARATION \*

Thus a great turn of events occurred, and the logic of the situation will take its course.

~~On January 13, Degrelle posted an excerpt of Pope Pius XI's words, printed in big red letters in Rex, praising the fascist characters~~

On January 13, Degrelle posted an excerpt of Pope Pius XI's words, printed in big red letters in Rex.

"Political action is a form of collective charity."

is a necessary as individual charity..." Was it to explain this maxim that Vlan started a chronicle entitled "The Dictatorship of Profit (du profiteriat)?" In it were published some society mandates of ~~some~~ administrators withheld by different Catholic politicians. This continued on the 22nd, in a copy which commented on the death of King Albert: this time the cream of the Catholic party was carted off judicially to the scaffold: Jules Poncelet, Carton de Wiart, de Kerckhove d'Exaerde, all were basked of the same clay. Next time it would be Pierre Davad, de Burlet, F. Delannoy, P. de Liedekerke, A. De Schrijver, L. Huert, L. Gendebien, Frans van Cauwelsert, Paul Wauwermans, Prosper Pouillet... a panoply of honorable men and respected names... Degrelle was now engaged in a vast manoeuvre of expurgation. It was thought that Vlan was destined to fight the leftist parties, but the wheels were reversed: "We have begun a clean-up," explained Degrelle. At the same time the leader of Rex was meeting (sic) (have no idea what this means - locked everywhere)... his success grew. No need to be astonished at this. The country, as well as the rest of the world was undergoing a grave economic crisis. Unemployment was at a record height, and anxiety was rampant in all social classes. Where would the remedy come from? Degrelle warned about this...

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Belgium is <sup>on</sup> the eve of ruin and disaster. It will need strong-hearted surgeons" (Rex, January 13.). He chose the best moment to become the public prosecutor. So many people had great weights on their minds!, So many nourished a <sup>mute</sup> ~~and~~ resentment! Finally a voice is raised to liberate thier consciences and dissipate their bitterness by designating and naming the guilty ones. What better stimulant for a <sup>dividend-fat</sup> ~~disinterested~~ reform of the State then to denounce politicians while workers of all classes were tightening their belts. <sup>and</sup> The classic procedure of demagogues of all times took its full effect.

For its part, the Catholic Action, through its Main Office executed its intended measures. Actually, the situation was paradoxical: Rex continued to occupy the same building as the Main Office, which was a neighbor to the ACJB. At the top of the main staircase, there was a door <sup>on which</sup> ~~was~~ a bold nameplate proclaimed: "Rex, General Director." To get to Mgr Picard, one continued through a backstaircase, to the second floor. Since the establishment of Rex, Degrelle had a great red flag made, emblazoned with an emblem, which now <sup>fluttered</sup> ~~was~~ on the balcony. The chief never failed to have his visitors visit "the establishment" without letting them suspect that

... something else in the house besides. Nevertheless, this inhabiting of the same building became too harassing! The Main Office formally canceled the lease. Degrelle ignored this, and delayed any action. The affair was settled in court, and finally on May 1, the Chief and his ~~entourage~~ <sup>following</sup> vacated the premises.

There were other troubles too. Degrelle's megalomania began <sup>to be costly</sup> ~~to be costly~~. In publishing so many books and newspapers, one after the other, in defiance of all control, Degrelle precipitated Rex's financial chaos. Creditors and printers claimed their due. Rex would have been liquidated at that time, if it hadn't been for one of his main creditors, <sup>who</sup> ~~who~~ realized that if he wanted to get any of his funds back, it was better to let Rex continue, subject of course to strict control. Thanks to that commercial speculation, Degrelle managed to get out of hot water.

As for Mgr. Picard, he wished to explain himself frankly but loyally. In Realiser, an organ of the JIC, he replies to Degrelle's last article. He sincerely ~~desired~~ <sup>desired</sup> to avoid "a show of polemics over the exchange of notes between the S.G.A.C. and Rex Editions." ( He still spoke of Rex Editions, whereas

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Degrelle only recognized the name of "Rex." ). "But we still wish to remain faithful to the golden rule:

Amicus Plato, magis amica veritas. This is why our language will <sup>be</sup> clear, but friendly."

He then continued to explain how the publication of Vlan had placed him in a delicate position. " At that time this weekly did not pose the same tone as it does now. It was seeking its way. We would have liked to see it oriented towards a doctrinal approach, which would have permitted the SGAC to continue to lend its official support to the Rex Editions . The changing of the subtitle from "All political life," to " All civic life," or "All public life" was envisaged. But its development took a completely different turn."

Rex Editions were constituted into an autonomous, cooperative society, no longer at the service of the ACJB nor of any other organization of the Catholic Action. <sup>One</sup> ~~It~~ could take one's time. This said, Mgr. Picard addressed a few corrections and some compliments to the "very admirable article" of M. Degrelle.

"The ACJB has never meant to stifle the enthusiasm and the activities of the young people in it. On the contrary, its motto which is the motto of all the Catholic Action groups, is that it is necessary to take a stand, and if possible, to stand in all spheres of human activity, be it social life, in the professions, in the

in the arts, in literature, in economic or political organizations... The goal of the Catholic Action is to stimulate and prepare its members to carry the light and life, conferred upon them by Christ, into all these directions. The Catholic Action, we often say, is an excellent thing provided one leaves it not with the intent of abandoning it, but with the intent of returning to it unceasingly to invigorate one's energies, take order from one's leaders, and to strengthen the bonds of friendship with one's brothers-in-arms and the apostleship.

" We are thus going further than M. Degrelle, and the Rex Editions in warning the Acejbistes against a narrow and exclusive conception of the Catholic Action. For the past ten years, we have repeated to all who will listen, that if the Catholic Action is useful to everything, it is only sufficient unto itself like religion, of which it is a manifestation and an enlightenment

to use an expression of St. Paul.

But, another principle constantly affirmed by the ecclesiastic authority was that the Catholic Action should not take on political responsibilities.

"As a consequence, the Rex Editions who have now become the directive center of a political movement can no longer claim the official backing of the Catholic Action, even for the religious or apostolic side of their activities. From now on Rex Editions must assume full responsibility of their commercial, financial and spiritual publication activities."

And finally, Degrelle's project:

"...was to make Rex Editions the religious flag ~~around~~ which <sup>would</sup> rally young people and men from all political sides, opposite or alike, as well as the political rally which would assemble all patriots regardless of political or religious convictions... this to us would be utopia..."

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These two things together under the same flag and leader seems to us impossible. Following this thought to the end, we would even say that there is something shocking in the creation of a mystical religious apost- liship, crowned with Rex's name and that of its leader, ~~which is the result of~~ ~~the resulting prestige to lead a political combat or conquest.~~

With these last words Mgr. Picard brought to light the most troubling and paptious tactic of Rex: ~~the religious enthusiasm and energy stimulated by his press~~ ~~the conscious exploitation of deliberately stimulated religious energy and enthusiasm (stimulated by prose) for other than its seemingly intended purposes.~~ The actual purpose of course, was the agitation of the readers to follow the personal whims and dictates of Leon Degrelle.

~~The~~ the separation on the organic plan was taken care of. As for their personal relations, Degrelle was careful to minimize the break. While their official relations were carried on through the mail and ~~the process server,~~ <sup>as</sup> in their personal encounters, ~~in~~ the corridors, never failed to disarm Mgr. Picard. Degrelle's sallies would disconcert even the most solid adversary. However Mgr. Picard did not like ~~being~~ addressed with such apparent esse and unconcern for the actual state of things.

~~reproach his recalcitrant pupils~~  
~~of sincerity!~~  
~~Why do you~~  
like to be would ask him, before witnesses. All this would slide off like water of a duck's back, nevertheless Mgr. Picard did not have the strength to make the final break. Magis amica veritas, sed amicus Plato...

In particular cases however, his actions were more rigorous. At a time when Rex's creditors were <sup>at</sup> the point of liquidating ~~the~~ <sup>the organization</sup>, Mgr. Picard sent some formal instructions ~~to~~ to Father Foucart from Moulin (France), on March 15. Father Foucart was the SGAC administrator, and the instructions concerned an arrangement to be made between Rex and the SGAC. "We ~~should have~~ <sup>need have</sup> ~~not~~ <sup>need have</sup> ~~trouble~~ about our actions concerning Degrelle, for it is he who brought about ~~the~~ the sanctions which we will apply against him, in behaving contrary to all orders we gave him. Nevertheless if we can retain his collaboration in the <sup>it.</sup> editing work, we will come out the better for ~~that~~. But he must be left with no power of administration whatsoever. ~~The contract on this~~ <sup>\* see cover (to be inserted here)</sup>: Mr. Degrelle is to have ~~under his direction~~ <sup>under his directions</sup> ~~solely for editing purposes; for his editing work,~~ he is to be strictly held to the directions of the Administration Council... he is to have a monthly indemnity

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...the creditors should claim the major management of Rex stocks, and they should name an administrator

If he acquits himself well in these tasks and ~~shows~~ gives evidence of having mended his ways, he ~~can~~ <sup>may</sup> once again find a position at Rex.

If not, he will be ousted by the Council, where he does not hold a majority in favor." Such views showed that Mgr. Picard had no authority over Degrelle at the moment. 1

Degrelle made every effort not to burn all his bridges behind him. The <sup>day</sup> after his forced departure from the ACJR House (May 1) he wrote to Mgr. Picard that he wanted very much to see him.... "not to talk to you about all our troubles, but to reaffirm the esteem and affection I have always maintained for you. I have suffered greatly from the incidents which preceded my departure, and I am most anxious to prove with all my heart's sincerity that my gratitude and affection are just as strong as ever, if not more so." And he proceeded to give him news about his children..That little message was touching, and actually Mgr. Picard was torn apart, beset and grief-stricken.

After Degrelle left, he <sup>took refuge</sup> ~~went to~~ at a friend's house, with <sup>the</sup> ~~the~~ affection: "It can't take it anymore..."

1 On February 9, Mgr. Picard formally expressed his will of "being absolutely free of any attachment to Rex, moral as well as material." He renounced the administration and collaboration of the society (letter to Mr.

St-Pierre Nothomb, with a power delegation in view of the February 14 general Assembly)

AMBIGUITY

Whatever our innermost feelings at the state of things, we ~~are~~ still <sup>hope that ambiguity will be clarified</sup> ~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~same~~ ~~way~~ and

~~misunderstandings~~ <sup>resolved</sup> Unfortunately nothing of the kind happened. Leon Degrelle continued to ~~be~~ <sup>play off</sup> ~~both~~ ~~ends~~ the Catholic apostleship, with the fervent declarations of an authentic militant of Christ-King, and political polemics, with all the vehemence of his ~~own~~ <sup>own</sup> temperament.

At the end of March, Degrelle's financial difficulties forced him to merge Rex and Vlan: each week the reader would receive a <sup>package</sup> delivery of two frontpieces: Rex on the first page, and Vlan in the back. The literary part exceeded the political part in quantity, but the one printed in picrate drew infinitely more attention. At the moment Rex was <sup>leading a</sup> ~~leading a~~ <sup>a sweeping drive of</sup> ~~leading a~~ against the franc-masons, on an occasion to harangue high finance, the "bankers' and the government which came to their aid. (many important banks found themselves imperiled). As to constructive ideas, Rex would borrow with <sup>charmingly</sup> ~~all~~ all the information it needed from columns of studies published by theologians of Christian democracy such as R.P.Rutten, the apostle of syndicates, and R.P. Arendt, director of the bureau of

syndicat students. He would write articles favorable to corporatism, a popular system in the different Catholic circles. All this did not distinguish him that much from existing currents, but at certain times more original ideas would pierce through. Thus, in an article entitled, "What we want for our country," Rex lists as a first point: "A stronger and more stable power, active and responsible, with direct, frequent, and pacific contact with the masses;" this is explained in precise terms: "... (this power) would be helped by a parliamentary, consultative organ, strictly and radically modified in its recruitment and in the specialization of its work." Even this ~~anti~~ antiparliamentarism did not seem to set Rex apart from a constitutional reform movement which ~~became~~ <sup>found favor</sup> ~~with~~ with a large number of Catholic intellectuals.

These fighting attitudes, and political <sup>perpetual</sup> ~~agitating~~ agitation became clothed in a Christian mysticism, in full evolution. In an editorial, a newspaper prints these lines:

"Insigne "Rex": a sign, a cross, a crown, a word. Rex's army has a sign and a word- What a Battle!- Its name: rexiste - its soul: Catholic - its heart: the heart of Christ - Its spirit: apostolic- Its promised land: the kingdom of Christ" (July 20, 1934)"

\* This word was translated from "insigne" which also means "notorious."

... the idea is clearly  
... radical formula is openly published  
... to create a Catholic State, and the royalty  
of Christ by politics." (August 24).

The tension mounted. More and more young people of the Catholic Action were being snatched up by this impetuous torrent, which Rex fed with the exciting force of its language. In each ~~copy~~ <sup>edition</sup>, carefully selected reader's mail added to show the growing tone of enthusiasm:

"Rex's progress; pushing aside all obstacles, and sweeping away the hypocrites and black prophets, Rex progresses everywhere, sustained by and incredible vigor, and thousands of regenerated Catholics. We have forgotten, ~~that~~ at the time of Rex's attempted assassination, that God's passion and the ardor of a youth ready to do anything, were stronger than gilded jealousy, venomous scandals and ~~drawing~~ <sup>drawing</sup> room cabals." (August 17)

Never has <sup>a</sup> ~~one heard~~ a more pathetic tone <sup>been heard</sup> as when Rex plays the victim. "Rex has been pushed around, murdered because of its apostolic intrangency, and the vigor of its ideal." The rest of the article expounds on the sufferings of St. Theresa of Lisieux.

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It goes without saying that with such tone, Rex continued to consider itself as an authentic Catholic movement. One day it passed a circular reading: Rex to be sold at all churches. Rex, the movement of the Catholic Action. "(July 12). \* see p. 27 - insert here

In constantly <sup>only</sup> creating a confusion <sup>keep away</sup> ~~the ACJB desperately tried to remove~~ <sup>this way</sup> ~~from our national life, even outdoing itself by the virulence of its ~~anxiose~~ language in regard to its customary positions~~

Rex succeeded in vexing the qualified organizations of the Catholic Action. This in spite of the ACJB's desperate efforts to keep this confusion from entering public life, and even outdoing itself by the virulence of its language in regard to its customary positions, both on a religious as well as on the political plan. On June 24, the Women's ACJB held a big <sup>rally</sup> (conference) in Brussels. It was the first of its kind. Tens of thousands of ~~young~~ girls from all over the country participated in it. On this occasion, Rex published a special edition inviting the girls to the apostleship, <sup>the</sup> by press. The ACJB was opposed to its distribution.

On September 25, Degrelle signed a circular addressed to the ~~Members~~ <sup>the</sup> of the Louvain section. It had a ~~very~~ <sup>very</sup> ambiguous title: "Rex, the Catholic..."

\* Rex, ~~is~~ political movement; Rex religious movement,

Rex this, Rex that, one was as possible as the next, that's it stood how ~~it~~

Further on, it read, "Throughout the country Rex can count on enthusiastic and disciplined groups working <sup>methodical</sup> unceasingly for the realization of their ideal:

to storm all the places of influence which modern world can provide for us and enlist them into the service of Christ-King end of the country."

Now it was the ACJB's turn to become impatient. Its General Committee published a new announcement, in the first days of October, emphasizing once again their elementary differences. The essential part reads:

" 1. Rex is not and ~~cannot~~ <sup>cannot</sup> pretend to be an organ

of the Catholic Action. It is not authorized to this effect. It carries on campaigns, such as its political campaigns for example, forbidden by the Catholic Action by their very nature, and <sup>re-iterated</sup> by the clearest and most ~~re-iterated~~ orders of His Holyness, the Pope.

2. Furthermore, we feel that if an institution <sup>integral</sup> presents itself under the sign of ~~Catholicism~~ <sup>Catholicism</sup> and ~~Christ's~~ <sup>Christ's</sup> royalty, gives this profession of faith

devotion and love, an outburst such as that which  
 characterizes the <sup>claims</sup>propaganda \*\*\* of Rex, and if it  
 arouses a veritable mysticism of religious essence  
 in its followers and collaborators, it is neither  
 fitting nor permissible for this institution to throw  
 itself into polemics and into campaigns which our  
 holy religion cannot be mixed up with. It is not only  
 the Catholic Action which should be disengaged from  
 politics, <sup>profane</sup>~~passions~~ and battles and passions, and  
 earthly interests, but all those who pretend to directly  
 serve ~~directly~~ <sup>Catholicism</sup> and represent ~~directly~~ <sup>of Mgr. Picard's hand</sup>."

This declaration, of which several preparatory versions are  
 in existence, clearly bears the mark of ~~Mgr. Picard's~~ his  
 style, ~~Mgr. Picard's~~ <sup>approval</sup> ~~Mgr. Picard's~~. The  
 bishop of Tournai, Mgr. Rasneur, sent it to the Catholic  
 newspapers and gave it his <sup>approval</sup> ~~approval~~. It was the  
 first time that an bishop intervened publicly on the  
 subject of Rex. At the same time however, several  
 previous directors of the ACJB made know their  
 disagreement with the Committee's note; they favored  
 the entry of our ACJB's into Rex, that magnificent  
 outcome of the Catholic Action movement. (October 60).  
 In stead of clearing up, the confusion deepened.

Feeling his popularity rising, Degrelle  
 had done in which to prepare; in his  
 honor, a brilliant assembly. There would be a "congress  
 of the youth press" held at Charleroi, on October 21,  
 under the form of a banquet. 5,000 would assist. The word  
 was "One isn't a friend of Rex if one doesn't come  
 to Charleroi." The scene was alluring: 10,000 plates,  
 5,000 glasses; 1 1/2 miles of tables; 10,000 slices of ham;  
 7,500 litres of beer; 30,000 toffees; 75,000 apricots...  
 a banquet a la Gargantua... a fabulous reunion... a marvellous  
 pleasure party organised in a bend... "Before the banquet,  
 mass at 11:00 o'clock... general communion in the morning...  
 After the banquet, a flaming procession..." And all this for  
 8 francs- all expenses included (September 21, 1934.).

For greater precision, 9 points were printed in the  
 following edition. Here are a few: "VI : The banquet will  
 be extremely picturesque. Jazz and entertaining music will  
 alternate with <sup>short</sup> flaming ~~speeches~~ and well directed  
 speeches. Around 4:30, Leon Degrelle, standing on a  
 high tribune in the midst of brilliant flags, will  
 address the enormous crowd, by spotlight. VII : Everything  
 will be arranged to be original and full of emotion:  
 Workmen's delegations in their workclothes, Rexist nurses  
 on their stretchers, and gymnasts (acrobats) will mix

fantasy with solemnity. There will be unforgettable moments." (September 28).

Degrelle knew what to do. Other corymbes before him had manipulated crowds in a similar manner; hence forward he would ~~copy~~ pattern himself after Hitler's and Mussolini's stage settings.

But someone kept watch at Tournai. The diocese authority raised its voice again: the mass requested by Rex for October 21 could not be granted - what's more the sale of Rex publications at church doors, learning establishments, and local places, was forbidden until a clarification was made. The blow was direct: Rex was openly disavowed by a bishop. This was a rather uncomfortable position for a "Catholic Action movement." What was Degrelle going to do? Thousands of readers waited breathlessly for the outcome.

The pen didn't cling to his fingers for long. Following the warning of Mgr. Rasneur, the following editions of Rex printed in front page headlines:

IN THE SERVICE OF THE CHURCH. Added in red type, were the following words from Degrelle: "A Rexite is a soldier with all the courage and discipline that the word encompasses; a bishop who is..."

Without a doubt, he added in commentary, we have ~~spent~~ ~~expended~~ 40,000 francs in expenses, but it is we ourselves who have swept our piles of plates into an immense ~~matter~~ of dishes. There was no doubt that

Mgrs. Rasneur did not forbid the banquet - no one asked us to cancel it, but we wanted to ~~do~~ do right..."

In the guise of the submissive son of the ~~holy~~ ~~holy~~ Church, Degrelle rushed to bow before the wishes of a bishop. In the same ~~mode~~ <sup>spirit</sup> (vein), he announced that ~~the~~ Rex's next effort would be focused on an intensive propaganda campaign of the Catholic Action, promised to demolish (disintegrate) the apostolic party of his program, and proposed the creation of a big popular daily - to serve this end. As for the political domain - there he would intervene only in the event that religious interests would be implicated (involved). The range ~~remained~~ <sup>remained</sup> pretty wide.

What more could one ask for? The admirable gesture obtained the calculated effect without any trouble. The Bishop of Tournai made it known that Rex's management counterordered (counteracted) its press congress and that it would "be in agreement with the ecclesiastic authority to give its activities an orientation conforming to the discipline of the Catholic Action."

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On his part, the Bishop of Liege, Mgr. Kerkhofs sent a warm congratulatory letter to Rex ( Rex October 19th). He communicated his feelings to Mgr. Picard, not without expressing the desire adding certain reservations and ~~expressing~~ that Rex be placed under ecclesiastic control, and more precisely, under Mgr. Picard's control.

Mgr. Picard was himself moved and shaken. He dared to hope again. In the "Bulletin of the Radio-Catholique" toward the end of October, he attempted a short clarification. After having reminded people on how things stood (on the present state of affairs), he concluded:

" We await Rex to make good its word with deeds. It has not yet been assumed by the ecclesiastic authority as an organ of the Catholic Action. Will it ever be? That depends on its ulterior motives (attitudes). Rex is no longer disavowed by the ecclesiastic authorities since M. Degredé has bound himself to surpress the causes of its disapproval. But ~~neither~~ <sup>neither</sup> is he ~~approved~~ <sup>positively</sup> approved of. The priest who has been charged with controlling the activities of Rex is not there as an chaplain of a Catholic Action group; he is not Rex's chaplain. Once again, let us not be mistaken

...the turn of events."  
 ...in the measures of severity.  
 ...will come out for the best. Mgr. Picard  
 ...to let it be known that he still  
 ...ful  
 ...to fill on Rex's side, even though this  
 ...had it not been established by the episcopal  
 authority, was made perfectly illusory by Leon Degrelle's  
 attitude. Mgr. Picard no longer tried to fulfill it.  
 But a breeze of pity blew through. Here and there, especially in Liege,  
 there were (doubts) that ACJP directors would go over to Rex  
 and bloc if the simultaneous coexistence of the two  
 movements would be declared incompatible. In short, the  
 counter-ordered banquet of Charleroi did more for Degrelle's  
 prestige than all his professed declarations of the love  
 of Christ-King. For an exalted youth - he was more than  
 an affirmer of faith - he was a hero of Christian  
 discipline; ~~\*\*\*\*~~ carried a bit farther - he would have  
 been a martyr.  
 It so happened that circumstances <sup>provided</sup> ~~\*\*\*\*\*~~  
 an exceptional opportunity for Degrelle to show himself  
 in public, as a defender of the faith. At this moment,  
 "The Free Thought" was exhibiting a <sup>wretched</sup> ~~misérable~~ (rather sad)  
 defrocked priest named Moreau in the Peoples House, in  
 the Wallon country. Moreau was giving violently anticlerical  
 conferences.

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Degrelle immediately sensed a victim. He decided to give <sup>a series of</sup> rebuttal speeches at those meetings. On November 4th, at Charleroi itself, he defied the ex-abbe and his ~~parade~~ <sup>parade</sup> of 2,000 ~~auditors~~ <sup>auditors</sup>. The same day, heading a Rexiste expedition, Degrelle helped the local population of Yves Gometee to stop a second conference. This was only the beginning. "The pursuit of the unfrocked priest" ~~was the~~ <sup>becomes front page</sup> news in the Rex newspaper. Degrelle will not let his man go. Wherever Moreau dared to show his face in the heart of the Liege country, at Sersing, at Borinage, he would see Degrelle jump ~~off~~ <sup>off</sup> on the platform after him, ~~and~~ <sup>and</sup> watch him crush the pitiful Judas with his thunderous voice of a youthful orator: "Wretched Moreau (Wretch!) You'll pay for this!" It's an oath. This threat was carried out so well, that on the 14th of December, Rex was triumphant: The unfrocked ~~priest~~ <sup>was</sup> Moreau ~~was~~ <sup>was</sup> thrown into the street by the socialists themselves. The Office of the General Council of the ~~Belgian Workers~~ <sup>Belgian Workers</sup> had in fact, issued an order to do away with a campaign of condemnation.

the pursuit of the renegade not only ~~clarified~~ <sup>clarified</sup> Degrelle as the champion defender of Christian faith, but also led to some self-revelations, through the activity of the dual oratory. As sure as he was with the pen he had never tried himself to this extent with the word. Now he proved to be equally proficient in both realms (with both weapons) .<sup>1</sup>

TWO CATHOLIC YOUTH MOVEMENTS? (p 171)

Nevertheless, this unforeseen success did not clarify the issues as far as the Catholic Action organizations were concerned. ~~Excited~~ <sup>Excited</sup> Battling in the religious arena and followed by an ever-increasing legion of youth shouting ~~these~~ <sup>these</sup> rousing cheers ~~spurred~~ <sup>spurred</sup> Degrelle was ~~practically~~ <sup>practically</sup> at the head of another Catholic youth movement. ~~Are~~ <sup>Was</sup> there thus going to be ~~two~~ <sup>two</sup> parallel movements - both "totalitarian?" the ACJB and REX? Could one possibly belong to both? The ACJB felt harassed for it was pressed to explain itself on all sides.

Deep down, Mgr. Picard ~~had~~ <sup>was devoid of</sup> confidence. He felt and at the same time found the ACJB to be gravely menaced ~~by~~ <sup>by</sup> ~~himself~~ <sup>himself</sup> in no position to act, with sufficient authority .

<sup>1</sup> In spite of his facility with the pen, it was a long time before Degrelle risked public speaking. His

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1 Note (cont)

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Louvain compagnons said that he refrained from intervening in the students reunions and that he proved himself quite inept.

His Eminence  
On March 13, 1935, He sent a long letter to ~~St. Eusebius~~  
the Cardinal van Roey ~~to inform~~ informing him of the state of confusion which reigned in the minds of everyone.

"For some", he wrote, Rex is more than the Catholic Action. Before long, Rex will replace the Catholic Action. Even ~~several~~ numerous priests (hundreds) are of advice this ~~opinion~~. " In his opinion, " the crux of the matter is to know if Rex is or is not ~~authorized~~ mandated by the religious authority. " Now, thought Mgr. Picard, Rex is not likely to get such a mandate.

" M. Degrelle wishes to exert a powerful opinion.

His most immediate ambition is to create a daily. Once he has this power, no one in the world can foresee what use he will make of it. He himself says nothing. Only one thing is certain: that he has an enormous ambition and dreams of "governing his country".

as he says. Impulsive as he is, he is capable of graver imprudences in a moment of social trouble.

" ~~ments~~ of his talent and deep generosity.

~~for a party, that he~~  
~~degrille. This would be a grave~~  
~~in any case, there seems to be absolute~~  
~~evidence that this risk cannot be officially~~  
~~run by the ecclesiastic authority.~~  
Furthermore, Rex's manner of acting is shocking and I am astonished that it draws so many followers. This can only be a matter of ignorance. In Rex's offices, one doesn't bother with the cult of truth..."  
Further proofs of this assertion were given by Mgr. Picard:  
" Let us suppose that these fears are exaggerated- it is surely not too exaggerated to give Rex the ~~responsibility~~ responsibility of its processes and campaigns. Let ~~him~~ <sup>it</sup> assume ~~his~~ <sup>its</sup> responsibilities courageously. Let ~~him~~ <sup>it</sup> consider ~~himself~~ <sup>itself</sup>, and let ~~it~~ <sup>it</sup> be considered as a Catholic newspaper. ~~None~~ <sup>to</sup> attributes the Church of the Catholic Action ~~with~~ the "Campaigns of a "Free Belgium" or with "Twentieth Century" or with "Rappel" or with "The Wallon Country"..."  
As far as I am personally concerned, it would be better were I completely dissociated from Rex.

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The mention of my name in any of Rex's affairs only complicates matters."

In conclusion, Mgr. Picard desired ~~an~~ episcopal intervention in the same spirit of thought.

This defection was not in vain (not without consequences.). Leon Degrelle was asked to come to Malines. There, declarations were heard that Rex was not of the Catholic Action, that Rexism ~~was~~ was not sufficient, that the Catholics should answer the call of the Pope, of the Catholic Action, and enlist in the organizations belonging to the hierarchy. He was given three months to clarify his position. Declarations of this nature actually appeared in the Rex newspaper.

The "Catholic Action Movement" was not then, a Catholic Action movement. The <sup>reappearing</sup> ~~re-opening~~ <sup>course</sup> ~~course~~ which followed the ~~assassination~~ <sup>an</sup> common-blest at Charleroi did not dwindle into integration. Thus a mounting (rising) curve began to appear, opened a series of big meetings whose <sup>more</sup> ~~more~~ and more openly political ~~character~~ and/or March, Degrelle ~~was~~ <sup>was</sup>

But Rex had other ambitions. It had those of serving the Church and Catholicism, but it had <sup>of</sup> others too. Leon Degrelle had told me twenty times, has told hundreds of people and doesn't make it a secret, that he wants to govern his country. What ever ~~is~~ the pretention meaning or the sense of this ~~expression~~ <sup>expression</sup> may be, whatever one thinks of the aptitudes of ~~the~~ Rex's chief to become the Head of Belgium, one thing is certain for us- and that is that an organism built upon Christian faith and charity, must not and cannot participate in such adventures." At this point the audience broke out into interminable applause.

Mgr. Picard ended his discourse by expressing his confidence in the ACHB. " It is almost 15 years <sup>through his</sup> ~~it~~ that the ACJB is wandering <sup>post war</sup> ~~in this~~ tumultuous/period ~~after the war~~," he said. "With some presumption, I can say that you have just been given quite succinctly, the theology and philosophy of the apostolat and the Catholic Action. Now, we ask you, "Is there ~~any~~ <sup>any</sup> ~~perfect~~ <sup>perfect</sup> coincidence of ~~ideas~~ <sup>ideas</sup> philosophical, theological, ~~and~~ <sup>and</sup>

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...of great pride." (1)

...of this allocution, the auditorium  
...to his feet and gave a long ovation to the  
...the song of To Christ-King arose spontaneously:  
Our voices answer: Glory to Christ the Victor! He is  
King of the world and King of our hearts."

This was a severe declaration against Rex. It was  
made solely  
not ~~expressly~~ against on the grounds of the  
collusion between the Christian apostate and ~~the~~  
political enterprise. ~~It was there with that~~  
~~content~~. That was without a doubt the  
principal argument invoked by the Catholic Action  
in its disputes with Degrelle. It was fully  
justifiable and fundamental, for an organization,  
~~which~~ tightly bound to the Church, and directly  
and fully subordinate in the ecclesiastic hierarchy,  
to have proclaimed as a sacred principle  
the distinction between the spiritual and the temporal.  
Was it not here that ~~was~~ the greatest originality  
of the ACJR? <sup>lay?</sup> And was it not in such a matter <sup>as this,</sup> that one  
could expect the greatest vigilance and most scrupulous  
susceptibility?

*He referred to  
Nevertheless in view of what one could call, and  
this speech was not of the real speaker with the  
completely by the speaker. He wrote it for publication  
in the "Catholic Review of Ideas and Events" (No. 10)*

...the Catholic Action  
...movement in Belgium, including everything that  
...the Christian ensigns, with the tacit or  
explicit assent of the episcopate, the distinction  
and especially the separation of the two domains was  
much less clearcut. The League of Belgian workers  
included a group of branches which encompassed all the  
life of its members, from the spiritual formation  
of youth (the JOC) and adults (especially in the  
Women's League) up to political action, parliamentary  
tactics, electoral propaganda (as a recognized section  
of the Catholic Party) <sup>socio-economic</sup> syndicalism and its <sup>intervent-</sup>  
tions. The Boerenbond was no less "totalitarian"  
as one liked to say then, and its local guilds  
organized religious manifestations as well as buying  
manure and oil-cakes. We know that this combination of  
domains was not the accidental result of a <sup>set</sup> of  
circumstances: it was the result of a systematic and  
declared conception.

Furthermore, the political formation at that time  
was frankly called the "Catholic" party; it was not  
solely based on Christian principles, but explicitly  
proposed to apply the ~~doctrine of~~  
*post-Final Encyclical* doctrines.

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Times were not so far away <sup>when</sup> a youth ~~\*\*\*~~ which  
 felt the awakening desire to serve a great cause  
 and consumed by ~~ardor~~ <sup>ardor</sup> to defend the Church would find  
 in the action of the Catholic Party the natural ~~focus~~ <sup>focus point</sup>  
 of its enthusiasm. ~~This was~~ <sup>This was</sup> ~~mentioned~~ <sup>before</sup> ~~therebefore.~~  
 (element)  
 Before 1914, a constant factor of dynamism was present  
 in the Belgian Catholics.

And then, didn't the Catholic Newspapers themselves <sup>often</sup>  
 mix ~~the~~ <sup>and</sup> the appeal to Christian sentiments, the evocation  
 of the Pope's teachings ~~\*\*\*~~ <sup>and</sup> with ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> political propa-  
 ganda and partisan polemics <sup>at every occasion</sup> ~~in~~  
their columns?

Thus, Rex's position clearly ~~\*\*\*~~ <sup>overstepped</sup> the  
 ACJB line. This was a grave ~~\*\*\*~~ <sup>fault</sup> ~~\*\*\*~~ for Rex  
 did not cease to avail itself of the ACJB and the Catholic  
 Action. However, it did not stray that far away  
 from a tradition which had always <sup>been</sup> ~~more or less~~  
 at the heart of the Catholic movement in our country.

In this light, one can understand Leon Degrelle's  
 words, ~~\*\*\*~~ <sup>answering [in answer to]</sup> ~~\*\*\*~~ his accusers: "Why  
 is Rex not permitted what is avowedly common usage  
 in the League of Christian Workers, at Boerenbond, in  
 the Catholic Party, and in most of the Catholic

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