

Guns and Rosaries: The Use of Military Imagery in the French-Canadian Catholic Student Newspaper *JEC*¹

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Bishops encouraging Christian fanaticism,² “gangsters” of Christ looking to pick a fight against communism,³ and calls for totalitarian Christianity⁴ were regular fare in the pages of the Catholic French-Canadian student publication, *JEC*, in the late 1930s and early 1940s.⁵ This newspaper, published by the Jeunesse étudiante catholique (J.E.C.),⁶ was not alone in utilizing military imagery to further the Catholic cause among students, but rather was communicating to the average student in contemporary terms a vision of the Church promoted by the Magisterium and lay movements alike. Since military imagery has been part of the metaphorical repertoire of the Catholic Church for two millennia, one can

¹ I would like to thank Marc Cels for suggesting this title for the article and the assessors for their constructive comments that led to the improvement of the paper.

² “En face d’une telle réalité, il faut **que nous devenions des chrétiens pour ainsi dire fanatisés**, des chrétiens christifiés par l’amour de Dieu comme notre baptême nous y a d’ailleurs préparés.” [In the face of such a reality, we must become, so to speak, fanatisized Christians, Christians ‘christified’ by the love of God for which our baptism, moreover, has prepared us.] “Et d’une!” *JEC* 1, no. 3 (1935): 2.

³ In the article, Christians are encouraged to battle the theory of communism, while praying for communists themselves, and to build up a corporatist society. Pierrot, S.S.J. Mont-Laurier, “Rome vaincra,” *JEC* 3, no. 5-6 (1937): 12.

⁴ Totalitarian Christianity is understood to be the only true Christianity, one that is not shut away in the sacristy, nor weighed down by monotony and routine. Suzanne Many, Gérard Pelletier, “Et *JEC* continue sa route...” *JEC* 6, no. 1 (1940): 2. Personalists gathered around the journal *Esprit* in France, whose thought was influential on members of Canada’s J.E.C., were also using the term totalitarian to describe Christianity. See J. Hellman, *Emmanuel Mounier and the New Catholic Left, 1930-1950* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), 178.

⁵ The first issue of *JEC* came out in January 1935. The newspaper, administered throughout by the organization J.E.C., changed its name to *Vie étudiante* in September 1946. It ceased publication in November 1964, when the editorial team resigned after episcopal concern that the paper was publishing works authored by avowed Marxists. See Gabriel Clément, *Histoire de l’Action catholique au Canada français* (Montréal: Fides, 1971), 274ff.

⁶ [Young Catholic Students.] In Europe the same movements often used the adjective Christian instead of Catholic.

expect shifts in its meaning and intended effects. The modern military imagery found in Catholic Action publications such as *JEC* was the result of the conjunction of this rich Catholic tradition of combative metaphors and the heightened militarism of the inter-war period in Europe. Military imagery, at the core of which is conflict, has long been a model both for the Christian's personal spiritual life and the community's relationship with others.⁷ This paper investigates some of the sources for the enthusiastic use of metaphors of battle that emerged among Catholic Action groups and looks more closely at how military imagery manifested itself in the pages of the French-speaking Canadian student newspaper *JEC*.

J.E.C. was part of the specialized wing of the extensive Catholic Action family, which grew out of nineteenth-century European movements concerned with the religious, moral and social formation of the laity.⁸ In the 1920s and 1930s the Church hierarchy took a more active interest in lay movements, particularly Catholic Action. In fact, Pope Pius XI (1922-1939) styled himself as the Pope of Catholic Action, calling the laity, and particularly youth, to "participate in the apostolate of the hierarchy."⁹ Pius not only circumscribed Catholic Action, limiting it to religious and educational purposes, but he also actively encouraged its establishment throughout the world. He began by calling for and, in 1923, approving new statutes that reorganized Catholic Action in Italy along the lines of gender and age.¹⁰ In the mid-1920s, however, the Belgian priest Joseph Cardijn (1882-1967) introduced an important innovation in this hierarchy-initiated

⁷ For an overview of the history of the image of the soldier of Christ, see Johann Auer, "Militia Christi," in *Dictionnaire de spiritualité, ascétique et mystique, doctrine et histoire*, vol. 10 (Paris: Beauchesne, 1980), 1210-1223.

⁸ For a broader picture of Catholic lay movements see Roger Aubert et al., *The Church in a Secularised Society*, trans. J. Sondheimer (New York: Paulist Press, 1978); Gérard Cholvy, *Histoire des organisations et mouvements chrétiens de jeunesse en France: XIXe-XXe siècle* (Paris: Cerf, 1999); Heinz Hürten, *Deutsche Katholiken, 1918-1945* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1992); Françoise Rosart and Thierry Scalliet, *Entre jeux et enjeux: Mouvements de jeunesse catholiques en Belgique, 1910-1940* (Louvain-la-Neuve: Bruylant-Academia, 2003).

⁹ Pius XI's encyclical *Ubi arcano*, 23 December 1922, is usually considered the document initiating Catholic Action, which was commonly defined as "the participation of the laity in the apostolate of the hierarchy." This hierarchical mandate differentiated the movement from earlier lay organizations. See Clément, 11.

¹⁰ There were to be three male organizations, one for adults, another for university students, and a third for youth, along with one female organization with three subdivisions again for adult women, university students and youth. For an overview of the development of Catholic Action in Italy, the structure of which can be viewed as Pius' ideal, see G. Poggi, *Catholic Action in Italy: The Sociology of a Sponsored Organization* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1967), 14-29.

Catholic Action.¹¹ He began to organize young workers into the Jeunesse ouvrière chrétienne (J.O.C.),¹² encouraging them to become apostles to their peers. More importantly, he introduced a methodology new to Catholic Action through which the workers were taught to “see, judge and act” in order to influence their environment.¹³ This new method led these young workers to analyze their milieu in very concrete terms with the aim of changing it in the light of Christian teaching. The turn to a particular social group and the use of a method that called for an analysis of the concrete began to spread. Soon other social classes were organizing themselves along the same lines.¹⁴ In 1928 J.E.C. was officially founded for students in Belgium,¹⁵ and was introduced to French-speaking Canada in 1932.¹⁶

This interest in laity and particularly in youth on the part of the Church hierarchy was not odd or novel. In the decades between the two World Wars various youth movements, not limited to any one world-view, flourished. Communists, fascists, nationalists, and religious groups formed their own youth organizations. Many shared a common dream of a new world. Most sported uniforms, marched with flags, organized camps and shared military trappings.

¹¹ Considering the significance of Cardijn’s work, it is surprising that so little has been written about him. See Bernhard Antony, *Zur Arbeiterschaft, zur Arbeiterbewegung entscheiden: 100 Jahre Joseph Cardijn* (Mainz: Grünewald, 1982); Marguerite Fiévez, Jacques Meert, *Cardijn* (Bruxelles: Éditions "Vie ouvrière", 1969); Michael De La Bedoyere, *The Cardijn Story: A Study of the Life of Mgr. Joseph Cardijn and the Young Christian Workers' Movement Which He Founded* (London: Catholic Book Club, 1958).

¹² [Young Christian Workers.]

¹³ *Manuel de la J.O.C.*, 2nd ed., (Bruxelles: La Jeunesse ouvrière chrétienne, 1930), 211ff.

¹⁴ Organizations sprang up for rural youth (J.A.C.: Jeunesse agricole chrétienne), working middle class youth (J.I.C.: Jeunesse indépendante chrétienne), and even youth working in ports and on ships (J.M.C.: Jeunesse maritime chrétienne).

¹⁵ J.-P. Archambault, *De Rome à Montréal: L'Action catholique à travers le monde* (Québec: Ecole Sociale Populaire, 1942), 62.

¹⁶ Clément, 201. It should be noted that Specialized Catholic Action always involved much smaller numbers than general Catholic Action. In 1958 specialized movements made up only 2.7% of lay Catholic Action. J.E.C. had 17,810 members, spread throughout most dioceses of French-speaking Canada. For perspective, the Catholic Scouts and Guides had 17,903 members at that time, while the largest lay organization belonging to Catholic Action, the Ligue du Sacré-Coeur, had 265,864. Jean Hamelin, *Le XXe siècle*, vol. 2, Histoire du catholicisme québécois, ed. Nive Voisine (Montréal: Boréal Express, 1984), 124.

The Quebec-based J.E.C. movement, under the initial direction of the Holy Cross Fathers, rooted itself in the classical colleges and convent schools throughout French-speaking Canada and in diaspora communities in the United States. It spread only with episcopal permission, requiring a mandate from a bishop in order to be active in any given diocese.¹⁷ The arrival of J.E.C. on the scene in the secondary schools of French-speaking Canada was a direct challenge to the Jesuit-led Association Catholique de la Jeunesse Canadienne-Française (A.C.J.C.), which had been operating in the same milieu since 1904, espousing service to both religion and nation.¹⁸ The newcomer J.E.C., taking its cue from Pius XI's emphasis on the apolitical nature of Catholic Action, insisted on a sharper distinction between matters religious and national. The differing visions and the rivalry between the different religious orders that headed the various movements caused tensions between the youth organizations. J.E.C., however, gained quickly in numbers and influence.¹⁹ J.E.C. finally severed its ties with A.C.J.C. and became civilly incorporated in 1941.²⁰ At the

¹⁷ Jean Paul Desilets, "Evolution des structures de la J.E.C. Canadienne de 1935 à 1961," (Ph.D. diss., Université d'Ottawa, 1962), 84. Not all bishops welcomed the new youth movements. In 1942 Bishop Courchesne of Rimouski, convinced that Specialized Catholic Action undermined the unity of the parish and family life and suspicious of the authority exercised by the chaplains and lay people, banned Specialized Catholic Action from his diocese. See Louise Bienvenue, *Quand la jeunesse entre en scène: l'action catholique avant la révolution tranquille* (Montréal: Boréal, 2002), 48-49.

¹⁸ The movement itself was inspired by student groups in France, in particular the Association Catholique de la Jeunesse Française (A.C.J.F.), whose motto "Piété, Étude, Action", basic programs and statutes, A.C.J.C. adopted. The A.C.J.C., limited primarily to the classical colleges and to male students, the few girls' groups being exceptions, numbered only 3,000 members during its most active years in the mid to late 1920s. Laurier Renaud, *La fondation de l'A.C.J.C.: L'histoire d'une jeunesse nationaliste* (Québec: Presses collégiales de Jonquière, 1972). For the reference to the girls' groups, see Bienvenue, 31, fn. 9. Cf. Renaud who notes only male groups.

¹⁹ Initially, there was an attempt by the Church hierarchy to foster the growth of the new Specialized Catholic Action movements without undercutting the older A.C.J.C. Following the example of Belgium and France, the French-Canadian episcopate appointed the A.C.J.C. as the organization under which the new youth movements would be federated. This federation produced a number of tensions not the least of which emerged between the various religious orders. According to Hamelin, the problem lay in large part with the Jesuits, who realized that each emerging Specialized Catholic Action group was being taken under the wing of a different congregation, thus threatening the Society's hegemony over student movements: the Oblates directed J.O.C., the Clergy of Saint-Viateur – J.A.C., while the Holy Cross Fathers were responsible for J.E.C. (Hamelin, *XXe siècle*, vol. 2, 428ff.) Bienvenue follows Hamelin's account, however, she considers that the differing visions vis-à-vis national and religious matters, not the competition between the orders, were at the root of the tensions. (Bienvenue, 45ff.)

²⁰ By mid-summer the organization adopted statutes, which were subsequently approved by the provincial government. (Desilets, 139.) A year later, in designating

same time, Catholic Action in general and Specialized Catholic Action in particular were given public hierarchical support by Archbishop Joseph Charbonneau of Montreal, who published his pastoral letter on Catholic Action on 29 June of that year.²¹

Catholic Action itself was a manifestation of what can be called ultramontane mass Catholicism.²² Although the term ultramontanism is more often used in discussions of nineteenth-century Catholicism, Staf Hellemans, among others, maintains that basic ultramontane views continued to dominate Catholicism up until the Second Vatican Council.²³ For Hellemans there are three characteristics of ultramontane mass Catholicism: centralization, a desire for doctrine and a *reconquista* strategy of the Church.²⁴ These were significant elements in Pius XI's papacy, especially as regards Catholic Action. Not only did the Pope bring the various strands of Catholic Action under the direct auspices of the hierarchy, but with his encyclical *Quadragesimo anno* Pius also provided the movements with a clearer doctrinal blueprint for the society that they were to build. His hope that the Church would reconquer lost spiritual territory was captured in his chosen motto – “Pax Christi in regno Christi,”²⁵ which pointed to his conviction that peace would only be attained by submitting to the reign of Christ. As Roger Aubert points out, the Church's pastoral perspective shifted from a defensive stance in the nineteenth century to one which emphasized evangelisation and reconquest by the beginning of the new century.²⁶ The call to conquest became ubiquitous in ecclesial pronouncements and Catholic Action literature. Military imagery was a well-suited vehicle to communicate these ultramontane aims to the populace at large. Through Catholic Action the

Émile Deguire as the national chaplain, the episcopate officially acknowledged J.E.C.'s national status. (Clément, 211.)

²¹ Joseph Charbonneau, *Catholic Action: Pastoral Letter of His Excellency the Most Revered Joseph Charbonneau Archbishop of Montreal* (South Bend, IN: Fides, 1943).

²² This is a term coined by Staf Hellemans in his article “Is There a Future for Catholic Social Teaching after the Waning of Ultramontane Mass Catholicism?” in *Catholic Social Thought: Twilight or Renaissance?*, ed. J.S. Boswell et al. (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2000), 13-34. In it he explores the intimate link between social Catholicism and ultramontanism.

²³ Adrian Hastings characterizes the Church during the papacies of Pius XI and Pius XII as fundamentally ultramontane. A. Hastings, “Ultramontanism,” in *The Oxford Companion to Christian Thought*, ed. A. Hastings (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 730. The article in *The New Catholic Encyclopedia*, however, argues that the term ultramontanism can only be used in an analogical sense when describing Catholicism after Vatican I. J.M. Gres-Gayer, “Ultramontanism,” *New Catholic Encyclopedia* 14 (2003): 283-386.

²⁴ Hellemans, 14.

²⁵ [The peace of Christ in the reign of Christ.]

²⁶ Aubert, 137.

laity was being summoned to do battle in a new way: not only were lay people to occupy themselves with their personal spiritual struggles, but they were also being called to join a veritable army, which, under the leadership of the Pope, and following the plan laid out in the social encyclicals, was setting out to conquer the world for Christ's kingdom.²⁷

In the theoretical literature of Catholic Action two elements from the wider Catholic tradition contributed to bolstering the military imagery. One was the theology of confirmation and the second was the devotion to Christ the King.

Confirmation was designated the special sacrament of Catholic Action, for it transformed its recipients into the soldiers of Christ. This association of confirmation with military imagery was not new. A formative text in the Western Christian tradition, now usually ascribed to the fifth-century Bishop Faustus of Riez, argued that confirmation strengthened one for battle against evil and gave the Christian weapons to fight the enemies of this world.²⁸ Over the centuries this explanation became a staple in the popular understanding of the effects of confirmation: succinctly stated, confirmation transformed the Christian into a soldier of Christ. This effect of confirmation was emphasized with renewed vigour in theoretical discussions of Catholic Action by popes, bishops and theologians.²⁹

The first quarter of the twentieth century also saw the rise of the devotion to Christ the King. Pius XI instituted the feast day of Christ the King in 1925 to be celebrated on the last Sunday of October. Through the feast, Pius hoped to educate the hearts and minds of the faithful in order to restore the "Empire of our Lord."³⁰ In recognizing this devotion, the Pope yielded to the petitions of "340 cardinals, archbishops, bishops and religious superiors, to which was soon added the backing of twelve

²⁷ A popular manual in the Catholic Action movement explained this new mobilization thus: "The Church has, and always has had, the two categories of persons – clerics and religious – at her service. Now at a certain point of her history – and precisely, after the assault of secularism – the Hierarchy saw that these two brave and faithful services were no more sufficient for the new needs of the new times. And then she thought of mobilising also the other members of the Church, who occupy by far the largest sector – the laity. Forthwith Catholic Action!" L. Civardi, *A Manual of Catholic Action*, trans. C.C. Martindale (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1936), 50.

²⁸ M. Hauke, *Die Firmung: Geschichtliche Entfaltung und Theologischer Sinn* (Paderborn: Bonifatius, 1999), 153-4.

²⁹ Pius XI, "Lettre au Cardinal Patriarche de Lisabonne," in É. Guerry, *L'Action Catholique* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1936), 264; Charbonneau, 21; Theodore M. Hesburgh, *The Theology of Catholic Action* (Notre Dame, Indiana: Ave Maria Press, 1946), 41ff.

³⁰ *Quas primas*, 1925.

Catholic universities and petitions signed by hundreds of thousands of faithful.”³¹ The feast had stemmed from one aspect, namely the social reign of Christ, of the popular nineteenth-century devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.³² Responding to governments, particularly in Europe and Latin America, that were growing increasingly antagonistic to the Church’s traditional role in the life of the state and society, laity, priests and bishops worked to counter this trend by encouraging Catholics to consecrate themselves, their families and their nations to the Sacred Heart and the concomitant social reign of Christ.³³ This devotion and social ideal took root among the faithful and many members of the hierarchy. Pius XI finally acquiesced to their petitions and instituted the feast day, which soon became associated with Catholic Action. The importance of Christ the King is captured in Luigi Civardi’s popular *Manual for Catholic Action*:

Catholic Action sets before itself the diffusion of Christ’s Kingdom among individuals, in the family and throughout *society*. The supreme ideal of Catholic Action is therefore the advent of Christ’s Kingdom. It is the militia of Christ the King, and on its standard is written the motto – Thy Kingdom Come. Therefore, the Feast of Christ the King . . . can be called the feast of Catholic Action . . .³⁴

The significance of the feast of Christ the King for Pius has been explored by Fabrice Bouthillon, who argues that Pius XI’s embrace of the devotion to Christ the King pointed to his fundamental opposition to the modern liberal project of building a society without reference to God.³⁵ Pius XI saw Catholic Action as providing the Church with soldiers who were fighting for a theocracy, as Bouthillon puts it starkly, namely, a society in which individuals and collectives are under the law of Christ.³⁶ What is significant, however, is that the battle was to take place not in the political realm, but rather in the social and cultural realms of human life.

By promoting the military imagery found in the theology of confirmation and the devotion to Christ the King, the Church was also tapping into the militarism of the times. It was, after all, the 1930s.

³¹ Aubert, 593.

³² Christoph Joosten, *Das Christuskönigsfest: Liturgie im Spannungsfeld zwischen Frömmigkeit und Politik* (Tübingen: A. Francke Verlag, 2002), 66.

³³ *Ibid.*, 81ff.

³⁴ Civardi, 14. Italics in the original.

³⁵ Fabrice Bouthillon, “D’une Théologie à l’autre: Pie XI et le Christ Roi,” in *Achille Ratti, Pape Pie XI: actes de colloque* (Rome: L’École Française de Rome, 1996), 294.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 297. Bouthillon goes on to argue that once Pius came into increased confrontation with totalitarian regimes his position shifted from envisioning concrete models for a Christian civilization to defending the individual. The triumphant King was replaced by a kenotic one, who poured out his life for his flock.

Military imagery and military action were common: Mussolini was in power in Italy, Hitler was taking control of Germany, and civil war was being fought in Spain. Writing on the importance of confirmation in Germany in 1935, the theologian Matthias Laros noted:

The young people in modern Germany and Italy boast of the possession of the spirit of combat. The Church also has emphasized it, and has given it a new religious meaning. The present Pope has done his best to impress the idea of the winning of the world for the Kingdom of Christ upon the minds of the faithful. If we, following his example, speak of Confirmation as preparation for service in the army of the Heavenly King, we are doing a lot towards making it attractive to the young. At the same time we are emphasizing its contemporary significance . . . Youth wants a Leader, a King whom it can serve, and in whose service it can aspire to manhood. Everything depends upon our youth finding the *right* Leader, the *right* King.³⁷

The military aspirations of the age, which were also intimately linked with the ideal of manhood,³⁸ could be harnessed to direct youth to Christ and the Church rather than to their race or national leader. Specialized Catholic Action was one of the ways in which the Church hierarchy sought to direct youth to the right Leader so that young people, too, could participate actively in spreading the Kingdom of Christ. Military imagery was put to use, not only in Europe, but also across the Atlantic.³⁹ Such imagery also manifested itself distinctly in the pages of the French-Canadian student newspaper *JEC*.

In establishing a newspaper, J.E.C. took its cue from its older sibling J.O.C., which considered it vitally important to have a medium through which to communicate to the masses.⁴⁰ The hope was that the newspaper would prepare the ground for the conquest of the milieu (to use the vocabulary of the day). Initially the newspaper's purpose was to promote the J.E.C. movement and its ideals among students interested in the movement; however, by 1940 it was decided that the paper should be addressed to all students, and should, therefore, take into its purview issues

³⁷ Matthias Laros, *Confirmation in the Modern World*, trans. G. Sayer (London: Sheed & Ward, 1938), 65-66.

³⁸ George L. Mosse, *The Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 107ff.

³⁹ Military imagery was not limited to the 1930s. In 1912 in Quebec, Abbé Lionel Groulx published his book *Une croisade d'adolescents* [A Crusade of Adolescents], which recounted his efforts to mobilize students in some of Quebec's classical colleges (Lionel Groulx, *Une croisade d'adolescents* (Québec: L'Action Sociale Limitée, 1912). Groulx also presented the students with the young seventeenth-century combatant Dollard des Ormeaux as an example of heroism to emulate. (See Hamelin, *XXe siècle*, vol. 1, 308-313.) The imagery employed, however, had a more romantic and backward-looking air, while that of the new Catholic Action movements would be decidedly modern.

⁴⁰ *Manuel de la J.O.C.*, 271ff.

that were of concern to the student body at large.⁴¹ For the first editors the paper's highest purpose was to communicate the values of the new Christian social order and so to challenge students to redefine their own attitudes.⁴² Writing in 1941, editor Gérard Pelletier insisted that the publication was neither a "funny paper," nor an educational one, nor one which provided readers with information about the world. Rather it was an instrument to incite students to action:

We want neither to amuse, nor to instruct, nor to inform, but, if necessary, to use farce, the treatise and the news to set into motion the inactive, to help those who struggle, to rectify false judgements.⁴³

The paper was fundamentally Christian, and, therefore, not limited to any one organization, but rather directed to all Christian students called to live out an active, world-changing faith.⁴⁴

The content of the paper was produced by both clergy and laity, with student voices gaining ground over the years. In the autumn of 1936, the newspaper's first editor, Fr. Émile Legault c.s.c., handed over his responsibilities to a student, Thomas Bertrand. The content of the paper, however, continued to be subject to clerical approval throughout the years of its publication.⁴⁵ Compared to the A.C.J.C.'s journal *Le Semeur*, a more

⁴¹ Desilets indicates that in the General Council of Christmas 1939 it was decided that *JEC* would be a newspaper directed to the entire student body. (Desilets, 284.) *JEC* was not the only publication produced by the J.E.C. movement. Militants and leaders had their own special publications such as *Bulletin* and *Conquérants*.

⁴² Thomas Bertrand, "Positions! Attitudes!" *JEC* 2, no. 11(1936): 2.

⁴³ "Nous ne voulons ni amuser, ni instruire, ni informer, mais utiliser au besoin la farce, la traité et la nouvelle, pour mettre en marche les inactifs, aider ceux qui peinent, redresser les jugements faux." Gérard Pelletier, "Bataille en tribune libre: Une mise au point à tous ceux qui se donnent la peine de réfléchir," *JEC* 7, no. 1 (1941): 2. See also Gérard Pelletier, "C'est la tâche...à laquelle nous sommes attelés," *JEC* 11, no. 10 (1945): 1.

⁴⁴ Pelletier's vision was consonant with that of J.E.C. In *Les journaux*, the newspapers were described as "instruments of propaganda," which "precede the leaders in the conquest of the milieu." The conquest was to lead to the establishment of the Christian social order. Jeunesse étudiante catholique, *Les journaux* (Montréal: Fides, 1943), 2-3.

⁴⁵ The nerve centre of J.E.C., its national leaders, chaplains and those in charge of various services resided under one roof from early on in what came to be known as the *Centrale*. From 1937 the leadership of both the male and the female sections found themselves on rue Viger, moving to the long-term home of J.E.C. on 430 Sherbrooke Est in 1941. In this community environment the chaplains' influence would continue to be great, though by no means dictatorial. Nevertheless, though the students took over as editors of the paper, clergy continued to function both as advisors and censors. From the mid-1930s to the mid-1950s, students appeared to accept clerical tutelage, and there seems to have been a fairly

staid publication that focused in large part on informing readers about the various activities of the organization's members, *JEC* addressed a broader array of issues in a livelier fashion and format. Moving from a four-page paper filled with short exhortatory articles to a twelve-to-sixteen-page paper with lengthier pieces, more regular contributors and columns, *JEC* included in its pages articles on global events, intellectual and professional formation, and cultural matters, which encompassed art, literature, cinema, in addition to fiction written by students. There were also special sections for girls and younger readers, for the bulk of the paper's content was directed to male students in the classical colleges.

In the first decade of *JEC*'s publication, many of the longer and ideologically more potent articles were written by clergy, most of whom were in their late twenties or early thirties, thus, not so far removed in age from the newspaper's readers. There were articles penned, for example, by Gérard Petit c.s.c., under the pseudonym Gilmard, author of numerous pastorally oriented books in the 1940s, and François Hertel, the young Jesuit teacher and writer, who was soon to leave Canada and the priesthood behind. The multi-talented Abbé Albert Tessier contributed photographs under the pseudonym Tavi. The importance of French Catholic thought was evident in articles written specially for *JEC* by the likes of Daniel-Rops, who was involved with the personalists, gathered around the journal *Espirt*.⁴⁶ At the same time, student contributions grew. The first half of the 1940s were particularly noteworthy for the solid contributions made by J.E.C. militants such as editor Gérard Pelletier, Alec Leduc (soon-to-be Pelletier), Guy Cormier, Pierre Juneau, Guy Rocher and Jeanne Benoît (soon-to-be Sauvé).

The readers were fifteen-to twenty- year-old male and female students in secondary schools and colleges. Initially *JEC* was sold in schools by J.E.C. militants at five cents a copy. Only in 1946 did the paper initiate a subscription campaign encouraging individual students to subscribe to the paper. During the first decade the newspaper circulated an average of 15,000 issues a month, and reached French-speaking students schools all over Canada and even some francophone communities in the U.S.A.

harmonious collaboration between the clergy and students. The dichotomy clergy/students is probably not a particularly illuminating one for this time period. Rather, the tone of many articles points to a collaboration between the movement's chaplains and students, who both saw themselves as modern and more authentically Christian, particularly vis-à-vis a more traditional and individualistic piety found among French-Canadians.

⁴⁶ The French personalist movement, with its focus on the dignity of the human person, its anti-bourgeois bent and its openness to the Left, headed by Emmanuel Mounier and centred around the journal *Espirt*, came to be an important influence on the editors of *JEC*. See Gérard Pelletier, *Years of Impatience: 1950-1960*, trans. Alan Brown (Toronto: Methuen, 1984), 17.

In the paper's first ten years, military imagery was plentiful: it included references to spiritual armies, enemies and battles. Each of these are examined below, beginning with the army, which can be considered from the perspective of leaders and troops. In the imaginary army painted in *JEC* there were two leaders of note: Christ and the Pope. These two leaders of the "Christian realm" were compared to and contrasted with other rulers of the day.

Christ was repeatedly presented as King – the King of Youth and the King of Peace. In preparation for the Eucharistic Congress in Quebec City in 1938, the front page of *JEC* featured an illustration of Christ the King with a chalice-shaped torso hovering over a cityscape.⁴⁷ A text devoted to the same Congress noted that a great visitor was coming to town, greater than Stalin, Hitler, or Mussolini, even greater than the Pope himself. Regrettably, the author noted, the world exhibited indifference toward this most important leader.⁴⁸ In an article published the previous year, the student G. Lefebvre argued that Germany's desire for a leader had been evident from the time of Charlemagne, when Christ, appropriately, had been the supreme head. Now Hitler had dethroned Christ and, along with him, the Church and family, putting the nation in their place. The lesson for French-Canadian students was that they were to remain solidly rooted in the Catholic religion by putting their trust in Christ as their leader, lest the nation usurp the place of God, as had happened in the Third Reich.⁴⁹ Exposing the quasi-religious claims of a dictator like Hitler, *JEC* insisted that its readers cleave to a proper hierarchy of allegiances, which necessitated differentiation between religious and national loyalties.

Like Christ, the Pope, too, was compared to the great dictators of the day. The most striking of the many references to the Pontiff as leader appeared on the cover of the January 1936 issue. Pius XI was compared to two contemporaries, Mussolini and Hitler. The fascist leaders needed to strike artificial poses to make themselves look authoritative. The Pope, on the other hand, was most powerful on his knees. Moreover, he was infallible and immortal.⁵⁰ These characteristics made him more worthy of

⁴⁷ *JEC* 4, no. 4 (1938): 1.

⁴⁸ "Le Père des Peuples viendra à Québec, cet été; Quelle réception lui réservons-nous? . . . A Québec, cet été, il y aura plus que Staline, plus que Hitler, plus que Mussolini, plus que le Pape lui-même." [The Father of Peoples is coming to Quebec this summer. What kind of reception are we preparing for him? . . . In Quebec this summer, there will be one who is greater than Stalin, greater than Hitler, greater than Mussolini, greater than the Pope himself.] Louis Claveau, "Réception Triomphale," *JEC* 4, no. 6 (1938): 12.

⁴⁹ Gérard Lefebvre, Séminaire de Philosophie de Montréal, "La Leçon d'Hitler," *JEC* 3, no. 5-6 (1937): 2.

⁵⁰ Though the paper did not expand on this statement, it would seem that what is implied here is the Pontiff's immortal soul, which, the editors evidently assumed, would come to enjoy eternal bliss.

allegiance than the posturing dictators. Thus, *JEC* pledged service to a monarch on his knees and acknowledged its Roman allegiance.⁵¹ The tendency in the early years of the paper was to underscore the role of the Pope as a world leader and as a significant player in world politics. Thus, the newspaper described how world leaders were lining up to visit the Pontiff,⁵² and how he was the true arbiter of peace.⁵³ The Pope was also a leader under siege, for his flock was the victim of the enemies of religion, concretely of national socialist, communist and anticlerical regimes in Germany, Spain, Russia, Mexico and elsewhere. Catholics were expected to respond to these attacks by rallying around the Pope and his beleaguered followers.

What can be said about the army led by Christ and the Pope? By virtue of their confirmation, the members of Catholic Action were seen, as already noted, as soldiers of Christ. Furthermore, in J.E.C., as in other Specialized Catholic Action movements, active members were called militants.⁵⁴ Moreover, in its early days the organization's motto called for members to be not only proud and pure, but also conquering.⁵⁵ Thus, in the first years of the newspaper, it was common to find exhortations to conquer littered throughout its pages. Though military imagery is normally associated with masculine identity, it is striking that in the pages of *JEC* female students also used combative metaphors. Girls wrote of being

⁵¹ "Pie XI. Notre chef! A genoux, priant pour les jeunes! Pour nous! Dans cette attitude soumise, il apparait infiniment plus grand que les dictateurs éphémères: Mussolini, Hitler." [Pius XI. Our Leader! On his knees, praying for youth! For us! In this attitude of submission, he appears infinitely greater than the fleeting dictators: Mussolini, Hitler.] Les Jécistes, "Notre Chef!" *JEC* 2, no. 1 (1936): 1.

⁵² *JEC* 2, no. 12 (1936): 4.

⁵³ "Le monde n'a pas la paix, c'est certain! . . . Pourquoi? Pour quelle raison les peuples se regardent-ils ainsi *torvis oculis*? . . . Parce que de leurs délibérations ils excluent le Pape, seul arbitre impartial et désintéressé." [The world does not have peace, that is certain! . . . Why? For what reason do the peoples regard each other with *torvis oculis* [fierce eyes]? . . . Because in their deliberations they have excluded the Pope, the only impartial and disinterested arbiter.] "Nous voulons la Paix!" *JEC* 1, no. 5 (1935): 7.

⁵⁴ The term militant, however, was not limited to Specialized Catholic Action. Some of the nuances of the term are captured in Gilbert Cesbron's 1953 novel about worker priests in France in a conversation between the worker-priest Pierre and the local parish priest: "Oh come now," said the Curé. "To each his calling, you know." "No, Monsieur le Curé. To each his own method, if you like. But every Christian has the same calling. There is only one." "We should all be militants, you mean? I know that that is the fashionable word." "*Shepherd* was a fashionable word once," said Pierre gently. "But let's stick to words that don't go out of fashion. *Apostolate*, for instance." Gilbert Cesbron, *Saints in Hell*, trans. John Russell (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1954), 120.

⁵⁵ This vocabulary was inherited from J.O.C. See *Manuel de la J.O.C.*, 276ff.

revolutionaries,⁵⁶ of following their female leaders like soldiers following their general.⁵⁷ In *JEC* both male and female youth were being called and exhorted one another to be obedient as soldiers and to fight like soldiers.

The next natural question is who was this army fighting, who was the enemy. Here one can make a distinction between two theatres of war, each with its own enemies. The first theatre spanned the world at large, while the second was the somewhat more modest theatre of war in the French-Canadian students' own backyard.

JEC echoed the prevailing sense of a Catholic Church up in arms on the world stage. This consciousness of being on military alert was expressed both as a call to offensive strategies and as a cry of an embattled community. In this global theatre of war, the enemy was sometimes as concrete as the communist regime in the Soviet Union and sometimes as vague as pagan immorality. *JEC* followed the concrete upheavals of the day, especially ones in which Catholics were victims. The paper noted violence in Russia,⁵⁸ Spain,⁵⁹ Germany⁶⁰ and Mexico,⁶¹ echoing reports

⁵⁶ "...nous serons féministes!! Mais de vraies; mais des féministes dans un sens éminemment chrétien. Révolutionnaires! Aussi. Une révolution dans les âmes. Y mettre le Christ à la mode. Modernes! – Encore plus. Ce qui veut dire que nous aimons l'initiative, l'audace." [...we will be feminists! But real ones; feminists in an eminently Christian sense. Revolutionaries! Also. A Revolution of souls. Making Christ fashionable. Modern! Even more. All of this to say that we love initiative and audacity.] "Et nous aussi..." *JEC* 1, no. 11(1935): 9.

⁵⁷ Ton cosaque Jeannette, "Lettre ouverte," *JEC* 3, no. 4 (1937): 8. See also "Quand tu auras ouvert les yeux, tu verras, oui tu verras qu'il te faut à tout prix, coûte que coûte, lever une armée fière, pure, joyeuse, conquérante! Pourquoi, une armée? Pour combattre celle qui t'attend à ta sortie de couvent! Si tu veux être prête, c'est maintenant, aujourd'hui, qu'il te faut forger des armes. Je ne te veux pas pessimistes! Oh non, pas du tout! Mais, a-t-on déjà vu des soldats partir pour la lutte sans aucune arme? Puis, crois-moi, quand tu te seras lancée à l'attaque, tu te sentiras sur le bûcher, car, ça va chauffer fort." [When you open your eyes, yes, you will see, it is necessary at all costs, cost what it may, to raise a proud, pure, joyous, conquering army! Why an army? To combat that which awaits you when you leave the convent [here – a girls' boarding school]. If you want to be prepared it is now, today, that you have to forge your weapons. I do not want you to be pessimists! No, not at all! But has one ever seen soldiers leave for battle without any weapon? Then, believe me, when you throw yourself into the attack, you will feel like you are at the stake, for it will heat up greatly.] Jeannine Morissette, Collège Ste-Croix, Saint-Laurent, "Aux armes!" *JEC* 2, no. 2 (1936): 9.

⁵⁸ Opinion de *JEC*, "A la recherche de notre bon Dieu," *JEC* 5, no. 1 (1939): 5; J. Folliet, "L'heroïsme est vacant," *JEC* 2, no. 9 (1936): 9,10.

⁵⁹ Opinion de *JEC*, "A la recherche de notre bon Dieu," *JEC* 5, no. 1 (1939): 5; Jeannine Morissette, "Pour mes petites soeurs les simples Jécistes," *JEC* 2, no. 10 (1936): 13; "Regard sur le monde," *JEC* 3, no. 3 (1937): 3; Julien White de "La jeunesse ouvrière", "Le Vrai visage de L'Espagne," *JEC* 2, no. 9 (1936): 10.

common in Catholic circles. There were also enemy ideologies against which war had to be waged. In its early years *JEC* reiterated the papal condemnations of socialism and liberalism, positing the Catholic social order as the alternative third way.⁶² Nevertheless, despite the critique of political systems, members of Catholic Action were not to involve themselves in partisan politics,⁶³ a principle that most students seemed to accept.⁶⁴ Taking its cue from Catholic Action literature⁶⁵ and papal encyclicals,⁶⁶ *JEC* often portrayed the modern world as a battleground between neo-pagan and Christian world-views, with the term pagan usually referring to the world of the passions and the senses.⁶⁷ The most comprehensive description of pagan attitudes was found in an article that contrasted a pagan Christmas and a Christian Christmas, with the former being a reverse image of the latter. A pagan Christmas was a gloomy and carnal season spent in cafés, dance halls, cinemas and shows, rupturing relationships with family members, neighbours and God.⁶⁸ Thus, the enemy was ideological, social, and moral.

JEC also turned its critical eye to a second theatre of war, namely to the student milieu, to see what enemies could be found there. On the cover of a 1940 issue of the newspaper there was a picture of a fighter pilot.⁶⁹

⁶⁰ “Jeunesse du monde: En Allemagne,” *JEC* 2, no. 6 (1936): 2; “Hitler veut...pourra-t-il?” *JEC* 2, no. 2 (1936): 8; Opinion de *JEC*, “A la recherche de notre bon Dieu,” *JEC* 5, no. 1 (1939): 5.

⁶¹ “Regard sur le monde,” *JEC* 3, no. 3 (1937): 3; J. Folliet, “L’heroïsme est vacant,” *JEC* 2, no. 9 (1936): 9,10; Opinion de *JEC*, “A la recherche de notre bon Dieu,” *JEC* 5, no. 1 (1939): 5.

⁶² “Le monde a la fièvre!” *JEC* 2, no. 1(1936): 6; “Trois écoles!” *JEC* 2, no. 2 (1936): 7.

⁶³ Guerry, 87-88.

⁶⁴ From the end of 1943 to mid-1944, a lively debate on the topic of students and politics ensued. Consciously or unconsciously maintaining the position espoused by Catholic Action theoreticians, the majority of participants in the discussion agreed that it was incumbent upon them to be involved in politics eventually, but that as students, their primary task was preparation through proper formation. Gérard Pelletier, “Le politique et nous,” *JEC* 9, no. 11 (1943): 1,2; “Questions dans la lune,” *JEC* 10, no. 1 (1944): 7; “Le politique et nous,” *JEC* 10, no. 2 (1944): 7; “Opinion française sur un problème à nous,” *JEC* 10, no. 3 (1944): 8; *JEC* 10, no. 5 (1944): 7; “Le politique et nous,” *JEC* 10, no. 7 (1944): 2.

⁶⁵ Civardi, 105ff.; Guerry lists some of the characteristics of pagan society: “1. La société a été dépouillée de l’esprit chrétien et la vie est devenue païenne. 2. Chez beaucoup, la foi chancelle et le sentiment religieux s’éteint. 3. D’une manière générale, l’immoralité règne.” [1. Society has been deprived of the Christian spirit and life has become pagan. 2. For many people, faith is unsteady and religious feeling is fading. 3. In a general way, immorality reigns.] Guerry, 170.

⁶⁶ *Quadragesimo anno*, 141.

⁶⁷ André Bonhomme, “En marge d’un concours,” *JEC* 2, no. 3 (1936): 10.

⁶⁸ “Noël chrétien, Noël païen,” *JEC* 3, no. 12 (1937): 21.

⁶⁹ “Vaillance, énergie,” *JEC* 6, no. 7 (1940): 1.

The accompanying text explained that, although fierce battles were raging elsewhere, the French-Canadian students' battle consisted of submitting to daily duty. Their battles were to be personal and spiritual ones that would contribute to their physical and spiritual growth and aid them in conquering their fellow students for the Kingdom. The enemies in this territory were rarely other ideological factions,⁷⁰ rather they were habits, sins and states of mind. *JEC*'s purpose was to inspire students to develop as full and integral human beings by becoming more authentic Christians. To this end readers were warned of the dangers of seeking only pleasure,⁷¹ power,⁷² and material happiness.⁷³ Often, echoing Pius XI,⁷⁴ the root problem facing students was identified as egoism, both individual and societal.⁷⁵

There is also an interesting cluster of problems variously described as mediocrity, monotony, indifference and boredom.⁷⁶ In fact in 1943 there was a curious seven-month discussion regarding the nature and roots of boredom.⁷⁷ As *JEC*'s primary task was to call students to action, a call that could readily be clothed in military garb, boredom and complacency were naturally targeted as capital sins. The topic, ironically, elicited a significant amount of interest. It is, however, difficult to judge from the paper alone the real extent and character of boredom experienced by the students. Those who wrote to *JEC* on the topic gave various explanations for the phenomenon: some identified boredom ultimately as a theological problem,⁷⁸ others as an existential one,⁷⁹ some saw it as being moral in nature,⁸⁰ while still others located its roots in the physical realm.⁸¹

⁷⁰ Communism was occasionally seen as a threat in Quebec, but never at the level of the student milieu.

⁷¹ Vincent Maranda, "Le Chancre des foules," *JEC* 3, no.9-10 (1937): 2; Opinion de *JEC*, "Le Bonheur et nous," *JEC* 4, no. 11(1938): 5,10.

⁷² Thomas Bertrand, "La vocation 'spirituelle' de *JEC*," *JEC* 5, no. 1 (1940): 5-6,14.

⁷³ O. Melançon, "Le Monde devant la foi et le morale," *JEC* 3, no. 9 (1936): 3.

⁷⁴ Benoit Baril, président général, "Programme d'un an et plus...l'Ordre Social Chrétien dans la Cité Étudiante," *JEC* 4, no. 1-2 (1938): 2.

⁷⁵ "JEC", "Les autres et nous," *JEC* 5, no. 3-4 (1939): 5-6; "JEC", "Au service des autre: Tous pour Un et Un pour tous," *JEC* 5, no. 6 (1939) 5; Opinion de *JEC*, "Egoïsme et service," *JEC* 6, no. 11 (1940): 5.

⁷⁶ La Rédaction, "Révolution," *JEC* 1, no. 10 (1935): 2; "Guerre à la médiocrité," *JEC* 1, no. 1-2 (1935): 4; Jeannette Bertrand, "Allocution prononcée lors de l'Assemblée publique de la J.E.C.F. au couvent de Saint-Laurent, 27 mai 1936," *JEC* 2, no. 6 (1936): 13.

⁷⁷ *JEC* 9, nos. 3-9 (1943).

⁷⁸ Egidus, Ottawa, "Dissection rapide de l'ennui," *JEC* 9, no. 4-5 (1943): 4.

⁷⁹ "L'ennui en vacances se réduit à ceci," *JEC* 9, no. 7 (1943): 2.

⁸⁰ Rosaire Audet, St-Anselme, "Avec l'automne...l'ennui récidive," *JEC* 9, no. 9 (1943): 7.

Moreover, those contributing to an activist newspaper such as *JEC* would have been particularly sensitive to any lack of enthusiasm on the part of their peers, whom they were trying to rally together for religiously rooted discussion and action. In addition, boredom was not a vice whose characteristics and causes would have been explained authoritatively in catechisms or other religious manuals; therefore, it was a real issue that students could discuss freely and at length without having to come to a foregone conclusion. In the much larger picture, boredom, it has been argued, has taken on epidemic proportions in modern society, linked, as it is, to a loss of meaning that is particular to modernity.⁸² Thus, students were identifying a serious enemy in boredom, particularly when one recalls that the 1930s and 1940s were a time of acute modernization in Quebec.

Once the army had been assembled, and the enemy identified, it was possible to do battle. What kinds of tactics did *JEC* propose to employ? Most often the battle was seen in terms of taking an ideological stand.⁸³ For students this meant becoming educated in Catholic thought, particularly social thought, as this provided the blueprint for the society that they were to contribute towards establishing. To create greater enthusiasm among the student body, however, more dramatic tactics were also suggested and more startling analogies were made.

The most curious suggestion for a battle weapon was the Mass: the soldiers of Christ were called to use the ultra-modern weapon of the Mass, which was likened to a machine gun. It assaulted the world with projectiles of grace, bringing death to the old person, allowing the new person, to use Pauline imagery, to be born.⁸⁴ This example fit well within the Catholic tradition of military imagery, though *JEC* had upgraded the weapon to a twentieth-century machine gun.⁸⁵

What is more interesting is that *JEC* was willing to acknowledge the admirable qualities of Catholicism's enemies and to encourage the adoption of their tactics. For example, Christians were called to be as

⁸¹ "L'ennui sous toutes formes," *JEC* 9, no. 6 (1943): 6.

⁸² See Seán Desmond Healy, *Boredom, Self, and Culture* (Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1984).

⁸³ Fernand Dumont notes that the crises and battles of the 1930s in Quebec were perceived to be on the level of ideals and doctrines. See F. Dumont, "Les années 30: la première Révolution tranquille," in *Idéologies au Canada français, 1930-1939*, ed. Jean Hamelin et al., vol. 1 (Québec: Presses de l'Université Laval, 1978), 1-20.

⁸⁴ Dominique Martel, "Savons-nous nos forces?" *JEC* 3, no. 4 (1937): 4.

⁸⁵ Evidently, this use of modern weaponry was not unique because it is found in the 1962 version of the Baltimore Catechism, complete with illustrations of different kinds of guns used as analogies for different ways to be influential as Christians. *The New Saint Joseph Baltimore Catechism*, Official Revised Edition no. 2 (New York: Catholic Book Publishing Co., 1969), 159.

audacious as communists.⁸⁶ Lenin was identified as a *jéciste* because of the way he used his will power to change the world.⁸⁷ Moreover, the communist leader was lauded for his ability to penetrate his milieu.⁸⁸ There was also one suggestion for an assault of a very different, albeit startling, nature: the *jécistes* were to be Christian nudists, baring their joyful souls to a pagan and indifferent world.⁸⁹ Was *JEC* simply trying to shock adolescents in Quebec, accustomed to the austere sexual morality taught in schools, by using images that so clearly did not conform to the Catholic ideals being trumpeted by the newspaper? Unlike the employment of machine gun imagery, by using images of Lenin and nudists *JEC* appropriated figures and practices that belonged to an enemy with whom no compromises could be made. Consequently, the shock value of these examples and metaphors must have been greater (particularly, when one considers that the example of Lenin was put forth by a chaplain). One surmises that the purpose was to place the comfortable and familiar Catholicism of these students into an unfamiliar framework, making use of a tactic that was already evident in advertising, namely abstraction. Through abstraction, parts of a larger symbolic system are used without adopting the entire system.⁹⁰ Adult leaders of J.E.C. were aware that they faced stiff competition as they tried to form students into committed Christians. They were faced with the dilemma of “how to present them [the students] the spiritual doctrine of Christ in a captivating way?”⁹¹ *JEC*

⁸⁶ “Du cran!” *JEC* 1, no. 3 (1935): 1.

⁸⁷ Maurice Lafond, “Lénine...un vrai jéciste,” *JEC* 2, no. 3 (1936): 6.

⁸⁸ N. Leblanc, “L’essentiel de l’action...savoir où l’on va!” *JEC* 3, no. 9-10 (1937): 13. This expression of “penetrating the milieu” was part of the Catholic Action lexicon and was understood as infiltration of a particular social environment and can be found in Cardijn’s methodology for Young Christian Workers. In a section entitled “La Conquête du milieu de travail” [The Conquest of the work milieu] the *Manuel de la J.O.C.* explained, “On n’influence pas, on ne transforme pas le milieu du travail de l’extérieur, à distance. Il faut y pénétrer, il faut y vivre, il faut y travailler, *il faut en être.*” [One does not influence, one does not transform the work milieu from the outside, from a distance. One must penetrate it, one must live in it, one must work in it, *one must become it.*] *Manuel de la J.O.C.*, 283.

⁸⁹ “N’est-ce pas, mon Jec, que nous sommes nudistes à notre manière? Hé oui! Devant ce monde païen, médiocre, rempli d’indifférence, nous mettons à nu nos âmes resplendissantes de joie.” [Is it not true, my Jec, that we are nudists in our own way? Ah yes! In the face of this pagan world, mediocre, full of indifference, we bare our souls resplendent with joy.] Bonjour mon Jec, “Lettre à “JEC,”” *JEC* 1, no. 4 (1935): 2.

⁹⁰ For a discussion of how abstraction affects religious traditions see Vincent J. Miller, *Consuming Religion: Christian Faith and Practice in a Consumer Culture* (New York: Continuum, 2004), 3, 81-85. I am suggesting that the reverse process is also taking place, namely, that religious traditions abstract aspects of other symbolic systems and use them for their own purposes.

⁹¹ [...comment leur présenter de façon captivante le doctrine spirituelle du Christ?] François Prud’homme c.s.v., “Le problème d’une spiritualité étudiante,” *Cahiers d’Action Catholique* 52 (déc. 1944): 153.

understood that it was fighting an ideological battle in which methods used by both political propaganda and advertising could be appropriated.⁹²

JEC readers were also presented with concrete examples of Christian soldiers. There was the recently deceased French marshal Louis Lyautey (1854-1934). *JEC* pointed to his pious attendance at daily Mass as the source of his success as a general in Morocco.⁹³ The suggestion here was that students were to embrace enthusiastically the highly regimented devotional life of their own boarding schools, which consisted of daily Mass, recitation of the rosary and visits to the Blessed Sacrament. There were also heroes from earlier times, who were enjoying renewed currency. St. Joan of Arc (1412-1431), canonized in 1920, graced the pages of *JEC*, embodying “French-ness,” sanctity, sacrifice and a virile femininity.⁹⁴ There was also the French-Canadians’ own Dollard des Ormeaux (1635-1660), combatant against the Iroquois, who had been mythologized and promoted as a hero for youth by Abbé Lionel Groulx.⁹⁵ These three examples together underscored the importance of piety, courage in conviction and personal sacrifice. The two latter figures, in particular, emphasized that the cost of success in battle, real or spiritual, was an offering up of one’s very self.⁹⁶

From 1935 to 1939 *JEC* called French-Canadian students to take up their ideological arms. In September 1939 real war was declared. Male students were faced with the possibility of seeing combat. In the face of this war, however, *JEC*’s first reaction was to urge students to focus their energies on their own formation. There was also a noticeable shift from military imagery to metaphors of construction.

Although male students had the choice of joining the army, *JEC* clearly encouraged students not to give in to this temptation, arguing that it was their duty, even a heroic act to stay behind and ready themselves for the work that would be necessary once the war was over.⁹⁷ For this reason,

⁹² Both movement and newspaper were well aware of the centrality of propaganda in their efforts. Every J.E.C. secretariat had its propagandist, while the newspaper was an acknowledged tool for propaganda.

⁹³ “Il était là, non pas comme un catholique à-demi, distrait, ennuyé..., mais son livre de prières à la main, suivant pieusement.” [He was there [at the Mass], but not as a half-way Catholic, distracted, bored..., but rather with his prayer-book in hand, following along piously.] “Lyautey!” *JEC* 2, no. 1 (1936): 5.

⁹⁴ Jeannine Morissette, Collège Ste-Croix, Saint-Laurent, “Aux armes!” *JEC* 2, no. 2 (1936): 9; “Au pays de Jeanne d’Arc: Une ambassade,” *JEC* 5, no. 6 (1939): 11; “Jeanne et les enfants,” *JEC* 8, no. 1 (1942): 3.

⁹⁵ “Dollard,” *JEC* 3, no. 5-6 (1937): 1. See also Hamelin, *XXe siècle*, vol. 1, 311.

⁹⁶ André B., “Sur le risque de deux jeunes,” *JEC* 8, no. 5-6 (1942): 3.

⁹⁷ Jean Etude, “Enrôlé,” *JEC* 8, no. 1 (1942): 8; Gérard Pelletier, “Guerre des Gaz contre les étudiants,” *JEC* 9, no. 9 (1943): 2.

too, the paper defended the students' exemption from prolonged military duty and overseas service.⁹⁸ *JEC* thus embraced the prevalent French-Canadian opposition to conscription for overseas services, though for different reasons.⁹⁹ While the nationalist anti-conscription forces rallied the Quebecois by insisting that Canada had no obligation to fight beyond its borders in a war that was not its own, *JEC* argued from the perspective of the students' vocation. *JEC* promoted a vision of a clearly stratified society in which students benefiting from secondary education were being groomed as the future leaders of society. For this reason, students had a moral obligation to put their energy into this training rather than participate in real combat in the battlefields of Europe or elsewhere. The students' task was to continue to grow in goodness, avoiding the small evils in their lives so that when they eventually became leaders, they would not be making war.¹⁰⁰ The use of military imagery declined. In fact, by 1940 the newspaper was complaining that everything was being seen in terms of war. To counter this, students were challenged to foster a perspective of peace by benefiting, for example, from the peace one experienced in nature.¹⁰¹ Moreover, instead of conflict, students were urged to look to the future and to the construction of a new world.

There was a widespread sense that adults and old ideologies had failed humanity.¹⁰² This new generation would have to take on the task of reconstruction once hostilities ceased. The students had a sense of biding their time, preparing themselves, as students ought, for the end of the madness into which the world had fallen. In the meantime the task of rebuilding fuelled much of the discussion about the importance of a proper formation, which would adequately prepare students for the task of reconstruction.¹⁰³ Consequently, during the war the paper turned more decisively to another metaphor, already found in *JEC* in the 1930s, but

⁹⁸ Jean Lacroix, "Sabotage," *JEC* 8, no. 9 (1942): 6; Jean Lacroix, "Pouick y était," *JEC* 9, no. 1 (1943): 1.

⁹⁹ For more on French-Canadian attitudes to conscription see J. Granatstein and J.M. Hitsman, *Broken Promises: A History of Conscription in Canada* (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman, 1985), 133ff.

¹⁰⁰ "C'est la guerre!" *JEC* 5, no. 9 (1939): 1.

¹⁰¹ "Vacances," *JEC* 6, no. 5-6 (1940): 1,6.

¹⁰² "La jeunesse ne veut plus être asservie par l'économie, trompu par la politique." [Youth does not want to be controlled by the economy, to be deceived by politics.] Gérard Pelletier, "Ce fameux après guerre," *JEC* 11, no. 3 (1945): 1.

¹⁰³ Suzanne Many, "Filles de mon sol," *JEC* 5, no. 11 (1939): 2; Thomas Bertrand, "La vocation 'spirituelle' de *JEC*," *JEC* 5, no. 1 (1940): 5-6,14; Gérard Pelletier, "Feuilles de laurier ou feuilles de chou," *JEC* 6, no. 4 (1940): 2; André Laurendeau, "Jouer à la balle au chasseur: De la guerre européenne au concours de vacances," *JEC* 6, no. 8 (1940): 3; "De l'ardeur plein des yeux," *JEC* 6, no. 9 (1940): 1; Gérard Pelletier, "Propos de guerre: Attitude," *JEC* 7, no. 8 (1941): 2; Jean Etude, "Enrôlé," *JEC* 8, no. 1 (1942): 8; "Paroles de Paul Claudel," *JEC* 10, no. 8 (1944): 2.

coming to prominence in the 1940s, particularly when the military imagery receded.

It was the image of the *cit  chr tienne*, the Christian city, that came to prominence during and after the war years.¹⁰⁴ This image had scriptural roots, was given prominence by Augustine, and was now advanced by an ultramontane hierarchy. The *cit * was understood more as a community than a place: a community in which the place of religion was public, in which religion had a social influence, and finally one in which temporal society was answerable to a spiritual authority. This larger *cit * could be divided into smaller constituent communities, a vision akin to the corporatist one championed by Pius XI in his social encyclical *Quadragesimo anno*. Students, therefore, were directly responsible for building up the *cit   tudiante*.¹⁰⁵ Seeing itself as integral to this project, *JEC* adopted a new subtitle in 1940: “At the service of the student city.”¹⁰⁶

This imagery of construction still fit the ultramontane framework: there was a perfect society to be constructed under the moral leadership of the Pope, who followed the lead of Christ the King. Catholic social doctrine provided a blueprint for the city. In fact early issues of *JEC* extolled exemplary builders of the *cit * such as Englebert Dollfuss (1892-1934), Chancellor of Austria,¹⁰⁷ and Antonio de Oliveira Salazar (1889-

¹⁰⁴ The *cit  chr tienne* was a catchword for the Catholic social vision. In a 1925 work approved by Pope and bishops alike, Henri Brun described the parameters of the term thus: “Par cit  chr tienne, nous entendons donc tout  tat qui, se plaquant r solutement en face de cette r alit  divine et reconnaissant par cons quent les droits de Dieu sur la soci t , met   la base de sa constitution, le respect des lois  ternelles, et se pose, comme principe   lui-m me, d’aider, soit activement, soit tout au moins passivement, c’est- -dire sans y faire obstacle, l’individu et la soci t , dont il a la charge,   atteindre la fin, pour laquelle l’un et l’autre ont  t  cr s.” [By Christian city we understand every State, which, placing itself resolutely before this divine reality and, consequently, recognizing the rights of God over society, places at the foundation of its constitution respect for eternal laws, and asserts for itself, as a principle in itself, of aiding the individual and society for which it has responsibility, be it actively, be it at least passively, that is to say without adding obstacles, to attain the end for which the one and the other were created.] Henri Brun, *La cit  chr tienne d’apr s les enseignements pontificaux* (Paris: Maison de la bonne presse, 1925), vii. For an account of the use of this imagery by Belgian students see M. Conway, “Building the Christian City: Catholics and Politics in Inter-War Francophone Belgium,” *Past and Present* 129 (November 1990): 117-151.

¹⁰⁵ [Student city.]

¹⁰⁶ “Au service de la cit   tudiante.” *JEC* 6, no. 1 (1940): 1.

¹⁰⁷ Adrien Cazes, Ste-Anne-de-Beaupr , “Un B tisseur: Dollfuss,” *JEC* 2, no. 5 (1936): 4; H.-P. Senecal, “Un Chef: Dollfuss,” *JEC* 3, no. 2 (1937): 4-5.

1970), Prime Minister of Portugal,¹⁰⁸ both Catholic statesmen who claimed to be implementing a Catholic social order in their respective countries.

In conclusion, it is evident that military imagery was taken up enthusiastically by the student newspaper *JEC*. French-speaking Canadian students made use of one of the key governing metaphors used by the Catholic Church in the 1930s, that of the Church as army and a faithful life as battle. Metaphors of combat put conflict at the centre of the Catholic students' understanding of their relationship with the world. *Jécistes* were to be ready to do battle against communists, pagan immorality and bouts of boredom.

In a world of emerging totalitarian social visions and states, military imagery emphasized the importance of allegiance. As totalitarian regimes vied for the total allegiance of their citizens, the Church called upon Catholics to be unequivocal in their ultimate allegiance to Christ their King. This was the challenge presented to the students of French-speaking Canada. And though one would assume that military metaphors would resonate more with a male audience, it is evident that female students were ready to appropriate some of these combative metaphors.

In 1930s-Canada military imagery served to rally Christians to spiritual combat. This spiritual battle often required an element of inversion in the use of military metaphors. Students were presented with the Pope as a leader who was powerful on his knees and a machine gun that fired grace not bullets. There were other paradoxes. The Catholic army was supposed to fight for the Empire of Christ, but its members were not to be involved in partisan politics. Moreover, when the possibility of joining a real army arose, *JEC* dissuaded its readers from doing so. Rather, the battle that students were to attend to was taking place on spiritual and cultural planes. In the use of some bolder metaphors and comparisons, such as the references to Lenin, one can detect something more than common Christian inversion taking place. Here elements of a system that was in fact opposed to Catholicism were used in order to shock Catholic students and to place their faith in a new and, hopefully, appealing perspective.

Noteworthy, also, is the decidedly modern, at times even futuristic, character of the imagery used. Though there were occasional appearances of medieval and early modern figures such as St. Joan of Arc and Dollard, most of the military imagery spoke to the contemporary situation: machine guns, dictators of the day, and in the realm of construction, modern cities with skyscrapers. Christian ideals were to lead to the future rather than reconstitute a past.

¹⁰⁸ H. Beaupré, Ste-Anne-de-la-Pocatière, "Oliveira Salazar: Un grand homme d'état, reformateur du Portugal," *JEC* 2, no. 11 (1936): 8.

Nevertheless, the attractiveness and efficacy of military imagery waned and gave way to other imagery found in the arsenal of ultramontane mass Catholicism, particularly that of building the new city. This imagery would prove to be constructive in Quebec as youth developed as a social group that was coming to realize that it had something to contribute to broader society.