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EDITORIAL

## CLINCH, GEARITY!

By DANIEL DE LEON

**A**CCORDING to the February 5th Connellsville, Pa., *Daily News* report of the anti-Socialist meeting held in the place on the previous day by David Goldstein,—a main Pillar, some irreverently call him a “main guy,” in the Roman Catholic political party—J.C. Young, an organizer of the Socialist party, sent up to the speaker a written challenge to debate on the subject:

“Resolved, That Socialism is not opposed to Catholicism, and that a Catholic who denounces Socialism is either ignorant, or a hypocrite.”

The subject was infelicitously worded. The technique was loose. There is not ONE kind of Catholicism; leastwise is there just ONE kind of Catholics.

There is an error prevalent in many a quarter that all Catholics are alike, and that to be a Catholic one has to be of the stupid, dumb-driven cattle species. It must be admitted, in extenuation of the error, that such arrant geologic stupidities as that the recent overflow of the Seine, inundating Paris, was a heavenly visitation inflicted upon France for the act of secularizing the religious orders, as was soberly claimed by Cardinal Gibbons; or such equally arrant sociologic theories as that the initiative, referendum and recall are devices of the devil, as announced by Archbishop Ireland; or such other arrant historic fictions as that the Catholic provinces of Germany were immune to the Social Democracy, as dogmatically prophecied by the now Cardinal O’Connell upon his return from Europe last summer;—it must be admitted that such, and but too many other such performances on the part of leading officials in the Roman Catholic political machine give a color to the error referred to. Upon what other theory, it is asked, do the Catholic masses put up with such stuff and stuffers?

Be that as it may, the fact remains that all Catholics do not put up with such

stuff, or such stuffers, either. And the proofs thereof are legion.

Leaving aside the powerful Modernist movement within the Catholic church itself, this very generation has seen an Archbishop of Pernambuco sentenced to three years' hard labor in the penitentiary for violating the civic rights of the citizen—and yet Brazil is a “Catholic country.” Despite Ireland's being a “Catholic country,” the motto of Daniel O'Connell, “All the religion you like from Rome, but no politics!” is classic. In Germany we have just seen the city of Cologne, cherished by the Centrum, the German Catholic party, as its “Throne,” and as “the Rome of Germany,” a city 78 per cent of whose population is Catholic, captured by the Social Democracy. In Italy, unquestionably a “Catholic country,” a Catholic dynasty has wiped out the temporal power of the papacy; and in Rome itself a Jew is elected Mayor by “Catholic votes” and the statue of Giordano Bruno, burnt to death by Catholic clerical decree, has been raised, by Catholics, defiantly, under the very windows of the Vatican. Illustrations need not be multiplied. While, as happens with all other creeds, some Catholics are of the ignorant, dumb-driven species, others are not; in fact, the majority are not. Hence, seeing the challenge did not specify, it was structurally defective.

Providentially, Mr. Goldstein came to the rescue of the challenger. The Connellsville *Daily News* reports that, upon reading the challenge, Mr. Goldstein, “becoming warm,” said: “Pope Leo XIII and Pope Pius X must be ignorant and hypocrites,” accompanying the remark with the gesture of “holding in his hand the book written by Leo, denouncing Socialism, and indorsed by the present Pontiff.”

The remark and the gesture cured the defective wording of the challenge. Remark and gesture propel the question:

“Was that book written *ex cathedra* by Leo, and was the endorsement made *ex cathedra* by the present Pontiff?”

The answer is—NO!

“*Expressio unius suppressio alterius.*” The specification of one thing excludes all others. The specific decree, rendered under all the pomp and circumstance of Roman Catholic legislative procedure, specifically clothing with “infallibility” the papal utterances that are made *ex cathedra*, that is, with certain solemnities,—that specific decree strips all other papal utterances{,} books, and endorsements, of the claim to

infallibility. Were Socialism one-millionth part the pestilence that the capitalist politicians ambushed behind religion, and whose phonograph Mr. Goldstein has become, claim it to be, then, the supreme duty of the hour, incumbent upon the papacy, would be to condemn Socialism *ex cathedra*. The papacy has abstained from so doing. Why?

Elemental logic, “the rule of reason,” establishes that abstinence—on the part of an official clothed with infallibility, if exercised under certain circumstances—to place in motion his infallibility against Socialism, “the synthesis of all pestilences,” is evidence that said official is not certain of his ground regarding the said “pestilence.” The louder Socialism is declaimed against by the Catholic political hierarchy, without backing up the declamation with a pontifical *ex cathedra* pronouncement, all the more loudly do the declaimers, from highest to lowest, kick their own declamations, “books” and “endorsements” to splinters.

One single papal bull, *ex cathedra* anathematizing Socialism, is worth more than all “books,” “endorsements,” and other “obiter dicta.”

It may be asked, What if the papacy should denounce Socialism *ex cathedra*? It will be time enough to cross that bridge when we get to it. In the meantime, by flunking in his proof; by summoning the papacy into the witness chair, yet failing to extract from his own witness the “best testimony,” that the case calls for, the only testimony that is admissible, under the circumstances, Mr. Goldstein has cornered himself.

The Connellsville *Daily News* reports that Jack Britt Gearity of the Socialist party was to take up the Socialist side of the debate to which Mr. Goldstein was challenged.

Clinch, Gearity! Clinch!

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