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EDITORIAL

## POLITICAL ROMANIST ABROGATING CIVIC RIGHTS.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**R**EADERS of the *Daily People* will remember that, certain members of the Roman Catholic diocese of Portland, Me., having petitioned their legislature to vest in the congregations the ownership and control of church property now held by the Rt. Rev. Bishop Louis P. Walsh as “corporation sole,” the said Bishop Walsh undertook, by wielding the thunders of his ecclesiastical office, to protect and secure himself in the job of “corporation sole,” that is, in a business and political office.

In his capacity of corporation sole Bishop Walsh holds absolutely in his own name all church property in the diocese of Portland. He can sell, mortgage or give away to his relatives every church building, school, convent or other institution, even the cemeteries. There is absolutely no legal check upon him in disposing of all this property as he sees fit. Into the wheel of this immense power, easily usable for private or political corruption, a considerable number of intelligent Maine Catholics purposed to put the spoke of a bill designed to vest the church property in the communicants themselves. Whereupon Bishop Walsh, the “corporation sole” attacked, utilized his ecclesiastical office to issue an interdict against the signers of the petition to the legislature in support of the bill.

The interdict cuts off those it is levelled at from the sacraments of the church and from Catholic burial. Naturally the persons affected rebelled against this injection of politics and business into their creed; and sternly did they put their foot down against the clerical presumption to annul the law of the land as expressed in the First Amendment to the Federal Constitution and in Section 15 of the Maine Bill of Rights, which guarantee the right of petition.

The subsequent conduct of Bishop Walsh in the face of the mighty protest of the

Catholics who realized that their civic rights were being trampled on, was truly Bourbon. Incapable of learning, the Bishop issued a signed “explanation,” which appears in full in the *Boston Globe* of June 27.

It would have been “money in the Bishop’s pocket” had he never written the explanation. The explanation convicts him and his machine of being exactly what the Socialist Labor Party has all along been maintaining—a property-holding, property-seizing political conspiracy against people’s freedom.

Bishop Walsh’s explanation is a typical Jesuit document. It is cast in the mold of Father Sanchez’s rule, set forth in Sanchez’s *Moral Theology* and quoted by Eugene Sue in *The Pocket Bible*, to the effect that to do murder is wrong, but “if you committed the murder, not for the sake of the murder itself, but in order to escape the dangers which your enemy might have thrown you into, in that case you have not sinned at all.” Exactly parallel to that, Bishop Walsh protests that he could not have punished his communicants for presenting a petition to the legislature “since the right of petition is a constitutional right of every freeborn or adopted citizen of our republic,” but (note well what follows) “the matter, manner and spirit of any petition or bill are subject to all the rules of reason, equity, justice, church discipline, Catholic appreciation and property.”

In other words, petition all you like, but don’t touch the political acts, or the material property needed in the enforcement of those acts by the Roman Catholic political hierarchy.

Nor is this double-dealing, this paltering with words in a double sense, an accident or an exhibition of “temperament” on the part of the Rt. Rev. Bishop Walsh. It is the outcome of a studied policy, outlined in the Encyclical of Pope Pius IX of December 8, 1864, in the three paragraphs:

“The church and her ecclesiastics have a right to immunity from civil law.”

“In case of conflict between the ecclesiastical and civil powers, the ecclesiastical powers ought to prevail.”

“The civil power is inferior and subordinate to the ecclesiastical power, and in litigated questions of jurisdiction should yield to it.”

These three paragraphs, together with the conduct of Bishop Walsh which flows

from them, again reveal the Roman Catholic political machine grasping for temporal goods behind the cloak of self-abnegating spirituality, and here in America endeavoring to enslave our people by scuttling their civic rights.

Bishop Walsh himself denounces the petition against him as “a scandalous attempt to . . . bring lay Socialism into the administration of church affairs.” Right well he senses the Spirit which modern conditions are raising up against his reactionary political machine and its reactionary political polity; and which sets its face like flint against civilization being trepanned back to the system of the Dark Ages.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official website of the Socialist Labor Party of America.  
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[slpns@slp.org](mailto:slpns@slp.org)