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THE
**Catholic Church
and Socialism**

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PART I.

BY FRANK BOHN.

In an open letter, printed and given to the public in the press, Rev. Father Kluser of Morgantown, W. Va., made the following remarkable statement:

"You want by all means a R-R-R-R-Revolution. Well, you can have it. We are keeping our six-shooters and gatling guns in good trim and we are ready to receive you. If we 15,000,000 American Catholics are not able to shoot off the heads of 117,984 Dues-Paying Socialists, we do not deserve to live."

These words probably express the views of an extreme anti-socialist fanatic, but from every authentic source comes proof that the catholic church, by command of the pope, and in pursuit of its ages-old custom, is united in relentless opposition to the socialist movement. The papal encyclical against socialism was first published in 1878. Since that date the catholic clergy have never spoken of the socialist movement except to deride and bitterly oppose it.

In the face of this opposition, with its endless perversion of facts and bitterness of spirit, the socialist party maintains a consistent attitude of calm and non-resistance. The socialist party replies to the representatives of the catholic church only to correct its misleading errors concerning socialism. Organizations have been formed and a press developed to inquire into, expose and oppose the methods and purposes of the catholic church. But the socialist party has never sought to carry the war into the camp of its self-appointed enemy.

For the work of the socialist party is confined absolutely to the fields of politics and economics. There it works and fights entirely within the limits of the constitution and the laws. Its position in the body politic is recognized and protected by law, and yet the catholic

church, challenging its right to live and to flourish, is exerting might and main to uproot it.

The Pope Commands the Catholic Church to Fight Socialism—In 1878 Pope Leo XIII. published the famous encyclical from which issues the united catholic opposition to socialism. It is entitled "Socialism, Communism, Nihilism." Published in the same year in which the brutal exceptional laws against socialism were passed by the imperial government of Germany, it marks the official unity of the pope and the hierarchy with the kings and the capitalists of the earth, in their war upon the working class. The following paragraph leaves no doubt as to the duties laid upon all faithful catholics in the conduct of this war:

"In short, spurred on by greedy hankering after things present, which is *the root of all evils, which some coveting have erred from the faith*, they attack the right of property, sanctioned by the law of nature, and with signal depravity, while pretending to feel solicitous about the needs and anxious to satisfy the requirements of all, they strain every effort to seize upon and hold in common all that has been individually acquired by title of lawful inheritance, through intellectual or manual labor or economy in living. These monstrous views they proclaim in public meetings, uphold in booklets, and spread broadcast everywhere through the daily press. Hence the hallowed dignity and authority of rulers has incurred such odium on the part of rebellious subjects that evil-minded traitors, spurning all control, have many a time within a recent period boldly raised impious hands against even the very heads of states. . . .

"It has even been contended that public authority with its dignity and power of ruling, originates not from god but from the mass of the people, which considering itself unfettered by all divine sanction, refuses to submit to any laws that it has not passed of its own free will."

The socialist movement in America is organized into a regular national political party. It is composed chiefly of American citizens and appeals to the American public in municipal, state and national elections for the purpose of making and administering the laws of the land. At the command of an Italian pope the rich and powerful hierarchy in the United States permits itself to lose no opportunity to attack and malign this political party.

