

# LAWSUIT

## Concerning Independent Schools



### Foreword

Several months after the affair of *L’Avenir*, there took place the renowned lawsuit concerning *Independent Schools*. In his *Life of Father Lacordaire*, de Montalembert wrote about it briefly with these words:

“The unexpected and very startling victory won before the jury did not beat down our courage. A new campaign was undertaken. The decision was made to concentrate the principal effort of the contest on the question of the liberty of instruction. Already brought up during the Restoration, this question [liberty of instruction - Trans] had achieved the status of right in the Charter of 1830, which, in its very first article promised: *it will be tended in the shortest delay possible, to public instruction and to the liberty of instruction*. The government was in no particular hurry to lend a hand in fulfilling this promise. By the rudeness displayed in carrying out the imperial decrees which had established this monopoly, University Ministry increased the irritation and the impatience of Catholics. The Rector of Lyon went so far as to have the pastors of that city dismiss the choir boys whom they taught at no charge.

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Translation from the French by Father George G. Christian, OP, and Richard L. Christian. © 2010. All rights reserved. Translated from: *R. P. Henri-Dominique Lacordaire, Allocutions et Écrits Divers, Tome III. Troisième Édition. Paris: Librairie Ch. Poussièlgue, 1898.*

On hearing this, the editors of *L'Avenir*, who had joined together as the *Agency for the Defense of Religious Liberty*, publicly announced, “understanding that liberty is taken and not given,” that three of them would open in Paris a school that is both independent and free of cost. “The University Ministry [alias Ministry of Education], they said, extends the liberty of instruction even against choir boys. Well, we wish to make it deal with adults.”

On 9 May 1831, at a site located on *Rue des Beaux-Arts*, involving only two shabby rooms, the independent school was opened after preliminary notice was given to the prefect of police. A rather large number of persons filled the second room. Noticeable among them were young members of the bar. Children from various levels of society presented themselves one after the other and were enrolled by the teachers: Messrs. de Coux, Lacordaire, and Viscount Montalembert. After a few moments of delay, everyone was seated, and Father Lacordaire began to speak.



### ***SPEECH***

For the Inauguration of Independent Schools

GENTLEMEN,

We are gathered to take possession of the prime freedom in the world, that liberty which is the mother of all others, without which there exists no domestic liberty, no liberty of conscience, no liberty of opinions, but rather, sooner or later, slavery, the bondage of all men to the will of a single man. It is enough to tell you, Gentlemen, that we are taking possession of the freedom of instruction. We take possession of it because it is our natural right. No law can forcibly take away from fathers of families the soul of their children;

indeed, no father can safeguard the soul of his son except through freedom of instruction. We take possession of it because it is our right as Christians. When Christ brought his word to the world, his word was liberating only because it was universal, so that every parent could hear it, every parent repeat it. Now, we cannot hear it nor repeat it except through freedom of instruction. And finally, we take possession of it in the name of the glorious Charter of 1830, which gave it to us. As French citizens and Christians, we will not allow one line of it to perish. Since it is true, Gentlemen, that nothing is more just, more sacred, more noble than that which at the same time commanded by nature — religion and the fundamental law of our country — we should all be pleased with what we are doing at the moment.

Young people must rejoice to see the end of a monopoly whose stern oppression has wearied their early existence. Few of them have not harbored in the secret of their soul vengeful acts to be taken against the University Ministry, and who still stagger from the injuries it has caused them. Indeed, wounds to the soul take much longer to heal. Those who are fathers of families should rejoice in having found again, with the freedom of education, paternal dignity. They will no longer see, if God supports us, a mercenary authority intrude into the domestic household and sell them for cash the corruption of their children. And finally, those who will become our students must rejoice that their country, after many wrongs, becomes an emancipated land where they can receive from those who love them with other than the love of money that knowledge which makes men happier than we have been. Nothing will impede all the traditions from passing from the soul of the human race to their own soul.

And yet, maybe we are flattering ourselves. In spite of the laws which support us, and whose benefits we simply reclaim, some will oppose our efforts with vague remnants of despotism which no longer has power or name. We will resist, as is appropriate for citizens; we will uphold our rights firmly; and though we are few in number, we consider that it takes little to win liberty: the heads of three children, armed with courage. Moreover, we hope that God will support us. His image is not yet here; it will take its place, it will protect the freedom of the world in that of a few children — and with all our heart, that is what we pray for. Yes, may God protect them, these offspring of a great people; may He grant them the grace to become, through freedom, mature men and saints, to be better than their fathers, and no more unpleasant than their posterity.

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Twelve children were enrolled on the very first day.

On the following day, at eight o'clock, the morning class was held without disturbance. But in the afternoon, a police commissioner, accompanied by three agents, presented himself; standing before the table of the teachers, who had stood up, he read a judicial commission from the Judge of Instruction ordering them to close the school, with armed force, if needed. The teachers immediately placed on their desk a written protest.

Father Lacordaire, in front of the Police Commissioner and facing a crucifix on the wall, then spoke in a firm and solemn voice: "The hour of our usual separation having returned, we will offer a prayer then leave." And so, kneeling down with his collaborators and all the children, he offered a prayer to the Holy Virgin amid a profound silence, while the Police Commissioner, standing immobile with his agents, observed the scene.

The prayer over, the Commissioner addressed the children as they were about to leave and told them: "In the name of the law, I declare the school closed, and I warn you no longer to attend until a decision in law." Father Lacordaire, extending his hands over them, told them in his turn: "You are here by order of your parents; we represent them, we are your fathers and mothers, you are in our arms as in theirs; no power except the law can separate us. You will be here tomorrow at eight o'clock."

The following morning, the Commissioner again appeared to call for the evacuation of the school. First of all, he addressed the students: "In the name of the law, I order you to leave." Father Lacordaire immediately replied: "In the name of your parents, whose authority I hold, I order you to remain." This twofold order was repeated three times and each time, the children, numbering eighteen, remained fixed on their benches, and cried out unanimously: "We will stay." After the last order, two sergeants armed and in uniform entered; they took the children by the hand and led them out. At the same time, the teachers were advised that seals would be placed on the outside door to their school. Father Lacordaire protested that the school was his residence, and that he would spend the night there unless removed by force. This protest in no way stopped the Police Commissioner,

who called every teacher by name and ordered them and all other persons present to leave. Father Lacordaire then said: "Sirs, I am here at my home; I thank you for having offered me your help by your presence here, for having helped me to defend your rights and mine, all of them violated in my person. Now that this friendly task has been completed, I ask you to agree to the request that has been made of you, and leave me alone with the law and my right." Everyone left.

The Police Commissioner, who during the entire operation conducted himself with perfect courtesy, again asked Father Lacordaire to leave the apartment. "I protest, the latter replied, that this is my residence, that I rented this apartment, that I have the intention of spending the night here, and that only force will make me leave." On orders from the Commissioner, a sergeant approached Father Lacordaire and touched him on the arm; the latter left immediately. Subsequently, seals were applied, and a judicial inquiry against the teacher was launched.

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### ***DECLARATION***

#### ***To Recognize the Competency of the Court of Petty Sessions***

On 3 June 1831, Father Lacordaire and Messrs. de Montalembert and de Coux appeared before the Court of Petty Sessions. At the beginning of the session, the lawyer for the accused read and explained the conclusions which impelled the teachers to reject the competence of the tribunal and requested to face a jury, in virtue of Article 69 of the Charter and of the Law of 8 October 1830, which authorized the Courts of Assizes to deal with *political infractions*. Father Lacordaire then asked to speak, to make known the motives which had brought him, and his collaborators, to question the competency of the tribunal.

GENTLEMEN,

It is not a sign of defiance that we wish to give to the judiciary by calling for a jury. God forbid! But we wish, first of all, to guarantee the true nature of the law which we are accused of violating. This was not an objection to the simple requirements of the police, but rather, in our estimation, an open attack, even though illegally constituted, against a body of the state — a political protest against its existence, a public and bold resort to the Charter, an appeal to France to take care that its supreme will not be misunderstood on one point: the soundness of its pledges. Such was the action by which we founded an *independent school*: an act of rebellion or of independence allowed to good citizens, but about which we assume all glory and all responsibility.

In addition, Sirs, we claim the right to jury because the jury is the natural bench for society, just as centuries have upheld. The name of the king in former societies was the one which every oppressed Frenchman called on for his defense; now that the word has lost its power, for reasons whose details belong to history, it is the jury which every oppressed Frenchman calls on. It is the jury which guards his liberty; and it will be jury that will save him if ever some senseless individuals were to consider tearing from France what had cost it so much. The jury is our very selves; consequently, it is our duty not to allow removal from our jurisdiction anything at all that ought not to be removed, lest by depriving us of them by privileges of courtesy, some day a Frenchman could reproach us for having compromised its defense and ill served liberty. Now, to be sure, that is not what we want to do. Catholics were late in taking a stand in the public realm, but they will no longer leave it; they hope, by perseverance and honest works, to restore the time when the country perhaps vainly sought them among men of action. We say, among men of action; because, in terms of suffering, they have largely paid off their debt. And so, we call for a jury, because every citizen must do this when he legally can; at the least, he must regret the fact that it is impossible to have the jury as judge, whether the law absolutely forbids it, or whether an erroneous interpretation prevents his access to it.

Finally, Sirs, the cause we have to defend is the cause of all fathers of families, the cause of the poor, the cause of men who grieve for having received only an incomplete education, the cause of the populace. Accordingly, we should not wish that fathers of families, the poor, men of different strata of society, in a word the populace, be judge of

that cause? Truly, we do hope for that; we are anxious to see presented, before some citizens, randomly chosen, this University Board which has had twenty years to win the love of families. We are all its children; what is there for it to fear? Why wasn't it the first to ask that a jury judge between itself and us? If it has earned esteem from France, it must desire, more than us, that our co-citizens intervene in this debate; the impudence of our ingratitude has rather enhanced its standing. Well, we who are nothing, who have not lived with the French generations for twenty years now, who confess to being fine and naive ultramontanes — and consequently have not enjoyed much privilege — we, unnatural students of that woman who claims to be our mother, we offer her a challenge: to select by lot, from any place it chooses, twelve fathers of families to be our judges. We make this challenge to the country before you, Gentlemen, you who are judges of the country, before all our co-citizens here present, before France. And since the University Ministry will not accept this challenge, we ask you for a jury, under whose competence falls every political offense, according to the Law of 8 October 1830.

In brief, Gentlemen, such are our motives. In addition, all three of us have signed the declaration, so that, whatever happens, it will stand as proof that we have neglected nothing in order to maintain our rights and to obtain justice from a detestable oppression.

### ***REPLY OF FATHER LACORDAIRE***

The floor was then given to the King's lawyer, who sought to uphold the competency of the tribunal. In unfolding his arguments, he accused Father Lacordaire of having expressed before the Judge answers little worthy of a loyal citizen; when interrogated for the reasons why he opened a school, he had replied that it was in virtue of the natural law, of the Gospel, and of the decrees of the Holy See regarding education. Father Lacordaire indicated that he would explain himself, and after a brief reply from his defense lawyer, the former spoke in these words:

GENTLEMEN,

The Public Prosecutor has accused me with a certain reproach, concerning which it is my duty to respond. When I was called to appear before the Judge of Instruction, I had to explain the reasons which had impelled me to open a school without authorization. First of all, I placed between the Judge and myself the sacred railing of the Charter; with that, having sheltered my freedom out of bounds, I invoked the natural law which gives fathers of families the inalienable power over the education of their children, and I declared that anything that was contrary to this natural law was *null in itself*. It is for this declaration that the Prosecutor reproached me, as something contrary to the sovereignty of the law. Now I deny that this sovereignty extends to forcing conscience to bow before commandments contrary to eternal legislation of which the human species is depository. I say that there are extreme cases in which we can oppose the will of the country contrary to the will of all centuries, and that the natural law which requires the respect of parents, not killing the enemy who on his knees asks for a subsequent life without danger — it is better to obey that natural law than to obey a law which obliges its citizens to become parricides or cold-blooded murderers. Is that the Prosecutor's accusation? I take pride in it! I place the city of all peoples ahead of the city of France. We have sometimes been very happy — and not so long ago, perhaps — to find the human race behind us to escape the country and the pressures, the tortures of certain laws which have appeared under the sun! [*Applause.*]

It is true that the Prosecutor spoke of the natural law, as if this meant the dreams conjured up in the previous century by certain philosophers. That is not the natural law of which I spoke, and if it were, I should be ashamed to have brought it up. Indeed, it is very clear that the thoughts of a few individuals cannot prevail over the law; if they could — everyone formulating everlasting legislation according to the caprices of the day — civil law would then be nothing more than the plaything of citizens. Fortunately, all individual philosophy set aside, there are sacred laws, immutable, universal, respected in all times; and these, I declare one more time, are above everything else in my heart; to them I pledge undying fidelity. I wish to recite all my life the words of the poet:

*And when the sovereign forbids all attempts at crime,  
One presents his head, and does not obey.*

The Prosecutor made another accusation. I admit it: I spoke of the Gospel in my examination; after having covered the citizen with the shield of the Charter, after having protected man by invoking rights which he enjoys from his nature, I thought I was permitted, because of the liberty of conscience, to say that in this matter, the Gospel is in accord with the primordial constitution of the human race and with the glorious constitution of my country. I was pleased to place around me, to defend myself against despotism, all these barriers — sacred for different reasons; I wasn't expecting the Prosecutor to be offended by them. I believed it was my right to express before the law, beyond my character as a citizen, my character as a Christian and as a priest, and to name the Gospel, dear to my heart and honored by many French citizens. Perhaps, after having reflected on the matter, the Honorable Lawyer of the King will refrain from accusing me of greater transgressions.

But there is one for which he will not pardon me that, after the Charter, the natural law and the Gospel, I invoked the decrees of the Sovereign Pontiffs in favor of freedom of education. For all that, I will explain my thoughts. The decrees of the Sovereign Pontiffs on all matters which the Charter grants freedom to the French, in all that relates to religion and teaching, those decrees offer us a rule which is optional for us to follow. When one is free, he or she can submit to those wills which he likes best; it has pleased us, we Catholics, to cherish the pontifical decrees which founded all the universities of Europe, protected sciences and letters, encouraged all discoveries, even that of printing, and created civilization. I could have remained silent about my attachments during the interrogation to which I was subject. But do you know why I did not? It is because Catholics do not wish to remain silent about anything. They wish to speak loudly and proudly because that is how liberty speaks. Moreover, the prejudices which are most strongly opposed to the freedom of conscience and of religion, these are prejudices against the common father of Catholicity. It is important for us to destroy them by using the rights which the Charter gives us to love whom we will, to believe what we will, and to broadcast everywhere our beliefs and our affections. The very opposition which liberty of conscience suffers, in relation to the Sovereign Pontiffs, conjoined with the everlasting memories of deliverance which they inserted into European history, has brought about today the most magnificent, the most pure, the most admirable expression of liberty which is the invocation of the pontifical name. *[General signs of approbation.]*

The King's lawyer did not request to speak; the tribunal retired to its conference room. After an hour and a half of deliberations, the trial was resumed, and the Presiding Judge delivered the verdict in the following tenor:

“Given the terms of Article 69 of the Charter of 1830 and the Law of 8 October 1830, it does not belong to the Court of Petty Sessions, but to the Court of Assizes to deal with political offenses;

Given that Article 7 of the law cited is demonstrative and not limited;

Given that Article 7 of the law cited, accompanied and followed by facts imputed to the defendants gives them the character of a political misdemeanor, in the case that an offense is recognized to be present;

The Tribunal declares itself lacking authority and remands the case to judges who are better qualified.”

This decision was greeted with applause by many in the public, from all factions. Several times, the Presiding Judge was obliged to tone down the outburst.

While the various elements of the prosecution were being vacated, the death of Count Montalembert invested his son with a hereditary peerage. Since the action against the accused was unitary, all three would be held accountable to the Court of Peers which heard them on 19 September 1831. Messrs. de Montalembert and de Coux rose to speak after the summation of their defense lawyers; Father Lacordaire opted to present the rebuttal. This extemporaneous speech began with the well-known words: “Noble peers, I look around and I am amazed...” It was published by Father himself and is found in a collection of his Works.

Mr. de Montalembert expressed himself in this way concerning the impression given by the address of his friend:

“ . . . On that day, Lacordaire won a new crown. He well understood the difference between men and things. Lively and unstoppable before the jury, he showed himself at once

political and moderate, without being any less eloquent or daring, before the ninety-four peers of France who represented many public services and many military and civil celebrities, but also many varied opinions and many powers in decline.

“Only five or six of these noble peers are still alive; but they will not contradict me when I affirm that the entire Chamber fell under the spell of the words and the person of the young orator. The unexpected audacity of his presentation aroused the attention of the less sympathetic ears. That proud language, which today many readers may find excessive, in no way shocked the noble audience where so many illustrious persons were seated. Later on, when my age called me to take a seat among our judges, I entertained the still-vivid recollection of the priest, who in the midst of the cruel storms of the year 1831, had awakened them for a moment by his captivating eloquence.”

The accused were condemned to the lightest penalty: a fine of one hundred francs.

Such was the first act of the famous trial which was not to be won until twenty years later.<sup>1</sup> The fine was a bargain price to pay for the honor and the advantage of having forced public opinion to consider a vital question for the cause of religion, as well as for Catholics to recognize the only grounds on which someday they would win.

[Endnote]

<sup>1</sup> On his deathbed, Father Lacordaire spoke about the matter in these terms: “The law on freedom of instruction [presented to the Legislative Assembly by Count de Falloux, Minister of Public Instruction and Worship,] was adopted on 15 March 1850 by a large majority, after France had languished for forty years under the monopoly of a lay institution. It had taken three revolutions to break this servitude, just as in the XVI<sup>th</sup> century it had taken thirty-six years of civil and religious wars to arrive at the edict of tolerance and pacification which was the glory of Henry IV, even more than his victories. The law on the freedom of teaching was the Edict of Nantes of the XIX<sup>th</sup> century. It put an end to the harshest oppression of consciences, established a legitimate struggle among all those who dedicated themselves to the sublime ministry of education and teaching, and gave to all those who had a sincere faith the means to transmit it safe and sound to their posterity. Faith is not a sensation devoid of expansion, a kind of esoteric and sordid treasure which is kept to oneself in the secret of one’s heart. Quite the contrary, it is altogether the most profound and the most recognizable of man’s feelings. To repress it in himself, to disinherit his children of it, even to compel him to doom them to a rash unbelief, is this not a punishment against nature, one which surpasses all those which tyrants have invented against their victims? Moreover, when one considers that, in a Catholic country, this punishment is inflicted on Christian families, one cannot but admire the inexplicable patience of such a noble people, and admire also the hand of God who caused three dynasties to fall successively, and who finally brought Mr. Thiers to defend, from the height of the rostrum, that liberty which he had refused us when he once said: ‘Education is the empire.’ ”

“ . . . Since the Edict of Nantes was for a century the honor of France and the fertile principle of the intellectual and moral elevation of its Church, so would the law on freedom of teaching be the sacred boundary wherein our dissents, rather than resolving themselves in hatred and oppression, would wage only legitimate wars whence would emerge the natural progress of society. If one rash hand, however powerful it be, would dare one day to breach this limit, set by common agreement in the thick of our discord and our revolutions, let that hand well understand that Louis XIV, in all his glory, dishonored his reign by revoking the Edict of Nantes, thus setting the stage for the XVIII<sup>th</sup> century and the downfall of his house. There are some points in the history of peoples which must not be disturbed: the Edict of Nantes has been one, the law on the freedom of teaching was another...” [From: *The Testament of Father Henri-Dominique Lacordaire*, OP, pp. 77-78. Translated by Father George G. Christian, OP, and Richard L. Christian. © 2010]

## ***EPILOGUE TO THE TRIAL***

A few days after the arrest by the Court of Peers, the following article, over the signature of Father Lacordaire, was inserted in *L'Avenir* of 12 October 1831. We publish it as the conclusion, drawn by Father Lacordaire himself, of that memorable campaign.

“. . . In our first campaign against the University Ministry, we had attacked it by frankly revealing its naked incompatibility with any and all kinds of freedom, by uncovering the sorrowful secrets of its establishments and of all its acts of despotism, by having petitions signed, and by founding independent schools. This will remain the pace for our second campaign, since we have to grasp liberty with robust force. We will not stop writing against the monopoly, to call attention to its ignorance, its impiety, its absurdity. We will amass petition upon petition; we will establish independent schools, not only in two or three locations, but everywhere a generous man can be found, or some fervent Catholic whom we will be able to persuade to take part in the emancipation of his country. We have already taken measures to open another independent school in the second city of the kingdom, and we are very grateful to those men, filled with faith and independence, who wish to direct it. Others will soon open in other cities. We enjoin Catholics to direct their gaze and their ambition in that direction. It would be a grave error if the judgment of the Court of Peers would lead them to see as fruitless efforts similar to the one which was condemned. Liberty is won only by repeated condemnations; if it had not been condemned, it would have been given; but liberty is never given, it is taken. This is a saying that we must always keep in mind. That France be covered with independent schools, that a thousand tribunals condemn them, chasing the teachers and the children; that the University's tax be rejected and paid under duress of the law; that petitions be signed everywhere and sent to Mr. de Montalivet, who will ignore them; the result of all those condemnations, of all this contempt, will be that education will become independent.

Indeed what glory would there be for Catholics if, instead of winning the freedom of instruction, it would have been given to them? These people, the University Ministry, are so foolish as not to see that freedom of education is inevitable, because it is a logical

consequence of the status of the world. Well, all the better! Because we will have that liberty to enjoy, and moreover we will be the ones to endow the country with it. In future ages, when we will be asked at which period the human mind was emancipated and who were the persons who brought about such an admirable revolution in the world, history will reply: 'It was in the XIX<sup>th</sup> century; they were Catholics, it was that religion which was accused of fearing liberty, and of seeking to enlighten men *by the glow of the stake*. On the other hand, if they who govern us, by the patience of God, offered us the freedom of education, what would happen? In five or six centuries, there would be found a liberal person paid by the Ministry of his time, some publisher of future *Messengers* [*Messengers*, a magazine], who would, without striking a blow, prove to his readers that the Catholics always loathed freedom of instruction. Moreover, we need to consider history more than the present. The greatest gift of Providence to the French Catholics is, without a doubt, that after forty years of revolutions, liberty was not able to establish itself in the country without them, and that today, they alone fight seriously for it. Look around: the last revolution destroyed all political lights, disenchanting all the famous people; it bared the despotism of all factions; nowhere is there any faith, any disinterest, any future. Here they are, those giants of three centuries, here they are lying on the ground, using what is left of their lives to mention Luther, Mirabeau, or Napoleon, and to blow on dead embers! They inaugurate the great torment of error, which involves the complete powerlessness of acting, and the even greater powerlessness of loving liberty. What a calamity it would have been for Catholics if they had received liberty from them as a gift! Thank heaven, they did not receive it; their enemies did not realize what they would have done against Catholicism if they had emancipated it. The judgment of the Court of Peers will be for posterity like the Charters of the Middle Ages, preserved deep in monasteries, to teach future centuries who, in the previous ages, were the genuine friends of liberty in the world.

Catholics should not deceive themselves about this. Nor should they consider unfortunate the resistance to their emancipation. They should not condemn what absolves them in perpetuity. They should especially not be discouraged because they paid three centimes to have liberty inscribed next to their names by their enemies. Nor when they will have a thousand times been condemned to pay a fine! Nor that it will take fifty years of punishment before becoming free! Indeed, it took three hundred years for the early Christians. But they were also able to say, without boasting, that they were the founders of the liberty of peoples, and no one could pride himself in having given it to them. They had

only God to thank for it.

And so, have courage! If there is one father who loves his son, one mother who loves her daughter, one Catholic who believes his faith is worth something, a man who seeks to be free: let all of them know that in France we will see families united, revered and blessed marriages, a lively and fruitful faith, liberty, peace, durable glory only when the University Ministry no longer exists. But it is not enough to know this; we cannot collaborate with the University by a faint-hearted silence. On the other hand, if we do stand with the University, we will have no cause to complain about the ensuing troubles. God has already punished many fathers in their children for the patience with which they tolerated the monopoly! Today when it's up to them to destroy it, when the Charter supports nature, the father who would not lower himself to invoke either one or the other calls upon his race one of the curses which have no name on earth, because, as obvious as they are, they extend into posterity beyond the limits of the human eye to follow them and understand them. Virginius killed his daughter to keep her from stain; woe to the father who kills his son and corrupts him with one blow!

We exhort fathers of families, Catholic priests, Catholics of all ranks and of all stations, lovers of liberty, whatever their beliefs, to work without ceasing at signing petitions against the monopoly of teaching, to open independent schools everywhere they can, to refuse as illegal the University assessments, to resist in every possible way the despotism and the fees of the University, to stigmatize it in the press, to speak, to write, never to be silent. As for us, as we continue to take our part in the common task, we will not cease to plead with our brothers and our co-citizens to free themselves. We will take all the opportunities possible to join action to words; and, so as not to be accused of going beyond the limits of legitimate combat, we will offer an explanation.

Things, not men, are what we are attacking. The men involved are unknown to us; it is impossible that the University Ministry not have men of great merit, many whose character is honorable. Their only deficiency is that they have not done enough to take a national stand that is worthy of them. If they loved liberty more and were more aware of their proper interests, they themselves would request the emancipation of education. They would achieve greater glory in common action than in the servitude from which they are the first to suffer, a servitude which stifles talent, which diminishes them into nothing as

individuals. As members of the University body, the reproach for the monopoly and its consequences falls in part on them. Many have already experienced this and claim with us the freedom of instruction. This is a tribute that we would wish for everyone, since there exists the possibility for everyone to earn it.

Indeed, education will be independent, in spite of all the resistance of authority.

