

EDITORIAL

FOLLOWING the Pope's disapproval of Russian Bolshevism, as expressed in his recent Allocution, Mr. Stephen Graham gives a detailed account of the organised persecution of Christianity in that unfortunate country (*The Times*, January 21). He speaks with commendable restraint, but his long experience in Russia and evident love of the people give to his words an authority that adds a further emphasis to the serious nature of the persecution to which Russian Christianity is now being subjected.

One of the foremost aims of the Russian Revolution is 'the complete destruction of Christianity and its moral code.' To force this policy on the people the practical means is adopted of closing the churches and meeting any opposition on the part of the clergy with imprisonment, exile, or even death. No religious instruction may be given to the children either in school or in private. Rigorous penalties are enforced for the infringement of this law. 'The churches in many of the towns have been converted into music-halls and cinemas, and the Red Flag appears where the Cross has been. The altar vessels and ikons have been confiscated and are now being sold as religious curios in Paris and America.' Religious persecution on a drastic scale is at present the main programme of the Soviet régime.

Another feature of the campaign is the ban put on all who offer themselves as candidates for the priesthood, with the idea that if the seminaries are closed down the Church will automatically come to an end when the old priests die out or are removed from office.

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But the domination from which Russia is suffering is not from within, but from without. It is foreign. Its promoters are not Russians. 'Two of its three leaders at present are Jews,' and this fact may bring about the speedy end of the Revolution. To deny God and all other than Soviet authority is a necessary condition for admittance into the Russian Communist Party. 'Evil is enthroned in Moscow.'

The attitude of the Russian people in face of these dangers to faith and morals is extraordinary. They crave for more and more suffering. "They have such sayings as, 'The more you suffer, the nearer you are to God'; 'The darker the night the brighter the stars.' If the ideas of the West prevailed in Russia a Holy War would have been proclaimed and the bloody threat of atheism in Moscow would have been chased away."

A calm survey of the religious and social misery that Communism has inflicted on the people of Russia should be enough to convince the Government of this country that the time has come for extreme measures to be taken against those who are trying to raise the Red Flag in England. Zinovieff, whose famous Letter miscarried so opportunely before the General Election, is said to have declared that his greatest dream is to see England at the mercy of Communism; and there can be no doubt that even now he is preparing to launch a campaign with that purpose as its ultimate aim. Only by prompt and stringent measures will these efforts be frustrated before their doctrines gain a hearing among the revolutionary minded.

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Cardinal Bourne's speech, on the occasion of his recent visit to Premierland, in the East End of London, is aptly described by our contemporary, *The Tablet*, as 'clear guidance of his flock concerning

their political affiliations.' After disclaiming any title to be called a politician, he emphasised the liberty of Catholics in political affairs, and declared that the Church would not think for a moment of interfering with her members who were zealous workers in the interests of Conservatism, Liberalism or Labour. Such zeal did not imply the slightest infidelity to the Church. Only in the case of a political party running counter to the principles and practices of the Church, would her members be called upon to sacrifice their political views and adhere to the doctrines of the Church. If ever the Labour Party became identified with Communism, or Socialism in the strict sense of the word, Catholics would be bound to withdraw their allegiance from that body until such time as these errors were renounced. With his usual logic and clarity of expression the Cardinal outlined the claims of the various parties, and concluded a memorable speech by warning Catholic voters against an excess of party politics, and to shun class warfare as something utterly un-Christian in its nature.

THE EDITOR.