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The RUSSIAN CRUCIFIXION

by

F. A. MACKENZIE

The authentic record of the persecution of religion under Bolshevism. It reveals the horrible treatment of men and women in the prisons of the big cities; in the Arctic North and in the hidden quarters of Central Asia. The story is even more terrible than Kennan's tragic record of Czarist days.

JARROLDS

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To All Who Love
FREEDOM

To All Who Love
JUSTICE

To All Who Love
GOD

"We know that you cannot help us or our people except by giving your sympathy and moral support to the principles of and workers for freedom, and by expressing a moral condemnation of the most cruel tyranny that has ever existed. We do not expect anything more, but all the more passionately do we want you to do that which is possible. . . .

"We are perishing! The coming dawn of liberation is not yet in sight. Many of us are no longer capable of passing on to posterity the terrible experiences we have been through. Learn the truth about us, write of it, you who are free, that the eyes of the present generation and of those that are to come may be opened. Do this—and it will be easier for us to die.

"We are sending this letter as from a subterranean dungeon; at great risk we are writing it; it will be carried across the border at the risk of life. But if it does reach you, if our voice beyond the grave is heard by you, we bid you listen, read, and ponder what we say. You will then follow the line laid down by our great author—L. N. Tolstoy—who in his own time cried aloud to the whole world: 'I cannot be silent.'"

A GROUP OF RUSSIAN WRITERS' MESSAGE
TO THE WRITERS OF THE WORLD.

RUSSIA, *May*, 1927.

PREFACE

THIS book is a record, a protest, and an appeal. I tell of what I myself have seen and learnt of the persecution of religion in Russia, and I voice the appeal of Russian people themselves against it.

The present anti-religious campaign, terrible though it is for those who are its victims, harms the Communist Government most of all. Bolshevism is building up a fresh barrier between itself and the West, a barrier that will prove more difficult to surmount than any other. Religion will survive, possibly weakened in numbers, and certainly poor in material things, but purified and with its faith and devotion intensified.

Many people believe that it is useless to protest. They regard the rulers of Moscow as beings so high, so remote from the outer world, and so self-centred, that they keep on their course regardless of what any may say.

Happily, this is not true. On more than one occasion, during the past few years, world opinion has induced the Bolshevist leaders to stay their hand. The most notable example was the abandonment of the prosecution of the Patriarch Tikhon.

Month after month in 1929, the persecution of religion increased, and the world remained silent. Then the widespread resentment revealed itself. Catholicism, led by the Pope, the united Churches in Great Britain and in the United States, and Judaism represented by its chief priests, spoke and are speaking with common voice.

At first, Moscow replied in anger, and it seemed that the sufferings of the people might be intensified. But as I write this, messages are beginning to arrive from Russia from Communist sources that the Communist attitude toward the churches is to be modified.

May this prove true!

Much of this book is based on personal experiences. I lived in the Soviet State from the autumn of 1921 until

the close of 1924. In the two following years I made my headquarters in Stockholm, frequently visiting the border cities in Finland, Estonia, and Latvia. I have since employed special means to keep in touch with the Russian situation. What those means are, or where employed, it is unnecessary to indicate.

My appeal for religious liberty involves an appeal for political liberty. The sufferings of the Churchmen have been paralleled by the hardships inflicted on non-Communists of all shades of opinion. Not for the first time, Christianity and Judaism stand on a common platform with lovers of liberty and justice, pleading for freedom.

F. A. MACKENZIE.

LONDON. *March*, 1930.

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[*Photo: F. A. Mackenzie*

THE HOUSE OF DEATH

Loubyanka II, Moscow, headquarters of the Ogpu (G.P.U., formerly known as the Che-ka). In this house, once an insurance office, more people have been killed and more misery inflicted than in any other building in the world in recent years.

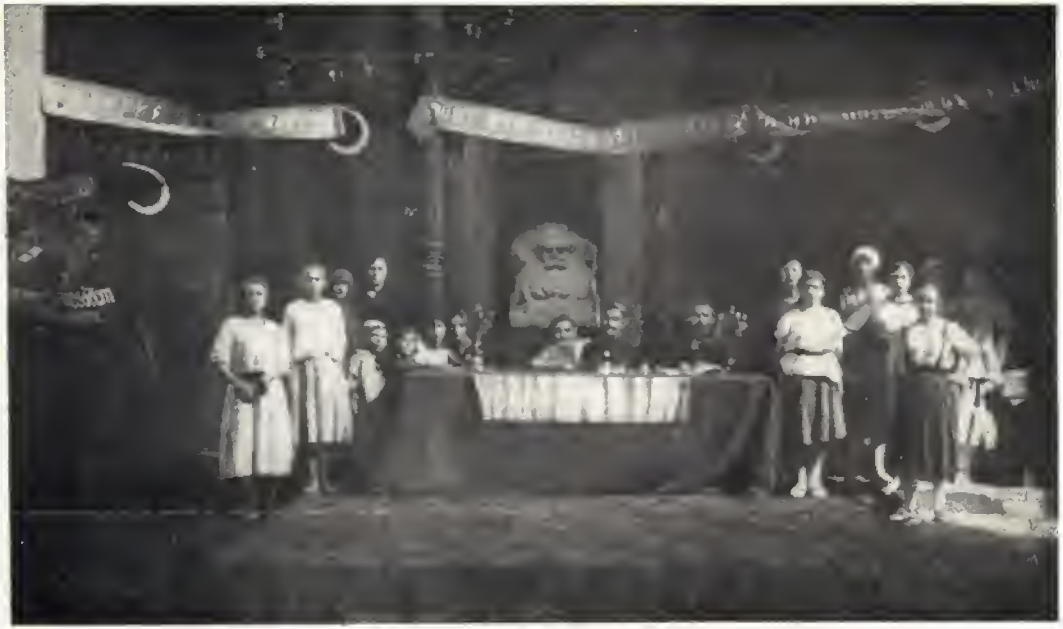


Photo: F. A. Mackenzie]

THE TRANSFORMED ALTAR IN THE CHURCH OF ST. PIMEN, MOSCOW

A bust of Karl Marx replaces Christ

THE RUSSIAN CRUCIFIXION

CHAPTER I

PURELY PERSONAL

THE value of any book on Soviet Russia, based even partly on personal impressions, depends primarily on the attitude of mind of the author, his opportunities to learn the truth, and the use he made of them.

Russia is not an easy land to understand at any time. The surface simplicity, lovable qualities and openness of mind of its people, conceal subtle differences in mental outlook, which cannot always be comprehended, even by a forced course of study in Slavonic novelists. The tendency of the West is towards materialism, of the Slav, idealism. Many of us judge success in life by what one acquires; the Russian by what one learns.

I was once asked by an absent friend to pay a quarter's allowance to her daughter, a student at Moscow University. A fortnight later a mutual acquaintance told me that the daughter seemed starving. Hurrying to her lodging, I found that she had spent all her money in part payment for a piano. The girl was unrepentant, even if hungry. "Music is my life, more to me than food," she declared, when I protested at her folly. And her comrades thought her right. We cannot always measure Russian mentality or morality with an English yardstick.

The second difficulty comes from the fact that, owing to fear of the political police, most Russian people are afraid to talk freely, especially to a stranger. The wholly honest inquirer may obtain a very distorted view of what is happening, for the vital facts have to be sought for and dug out. Another personal experience may illustrate this. Arriving at a northern city where I had expected to find a number of exiles, I tried to come in touch with them, at first in vain. I could not go to the authorities, for obvious reasons, and everyone else professed ignorance, for it is not wholesome to be a friend of exiles. I spoke to a priest in a church, but

could obtain nothing but generalities from him. Leaving the church, I noticed a street or two away a blind woman standing helplessly at the foot of the stairs of a *nomera*. She told me that she wanted to go to Church, and I naturally showed her the way over the broken-boarded side-walks, and led her to a place near the altar. As I was walking out of the building, the priest hurried up to me. "Now I know that you are a true man," said he. "No Communist would do that," and he told me what I wanted. But for that chance encounter I might have gone from the city declaring that all stories of what was happening there were exaggerated, but I was able to see for myself that not half had been told.

The third factor is the mentality of the investigator. I have known men arrive in Russia so full of preconceived ideas that they could see nothing but what confirmed their views. "It is not necessary for me to talk to the people to learn the truth," a highly-placed American politician once told me. "I am a practical man and can judge for myself." Incidentally, he got his facts mostly wrong.

It is because the attitude of the investigator is of such importance, that I tell, frankly and fully, how I came to go to Russia.

One summer afternoon, I was sitting with a friend in the dining-room of the Savage Club, London, discussing the world in general. My companion was Dr. Reginald Farrar, son of the famous Dean, and himself a distinguished official of the British Ministry of Health. We both knew outlying parts of the world, and compared experiences. Gradually, our talk drifted to the situation in Russia. The period of military Communism had just ended, the Allied blockade was over, and jumbled reports of uprisings, coming famine and the abandonment of Communism were reaching London daily from Riga, Warsaw and Helsingfors.

We both of us distrusted these reports, and with reason. It seemed strange that there should be so much uncertainty about the progress of the most extraordinary experiment in government that the world had witnessed for centuries. One of us—I forget which—suggested that we should go and see for ourselves. Dr. Farrar declared that he would try to be sent on an official mission from his Ministry. I resolved to induce some editor to commission me.

I had for some years been closely connected with an important British newspaper group. Its chiefs had given

me many opportunities to travel over the world, and had shown me much kindness and consideration. But I did not turn to them now. They had taken a strong line against the Bolshevist Government, and I felt that however impartial I might strive to be, there was a danger of my being subconsciously influenced by their attitude.

Thanks to the helpfulness of Mr. Edward Price Bell, of the Chicago *Daily News*, and to Lord Beaverbrook and Mr. R. D. Blumenfeld of the *Daily Express*, I was able to make a satisfactory arrangement for a winter visit to Moscow, a visit which was later to extend to several years. It was agreed that I was to have an entirely free hand, to go where I pleased, see what I thought best, and describe what I saw, without fear or favour.

The year was 1921. The blockade had not long ended and normal communications had not been re-established. The head of the Soviet Delegation in London sent an application through to Moscow for my visa and received the reply refusing it "because of the attitude of the Allied Powers towards the Japanese occupation of Vladivostok!" I attempted to get in touch with Moscow and, since there was then no direct cable service, I appealed to Marconi's to help me. Marconi's had found it almost impossible to obtain answers to broadcasts from the Russian wireless, but promised to send out a call every few hours. Moscow, however, would not reply. I was secretly assured that if I enlisted the aid of a man described to me as a powerful political agent, I could obtain a permit. The political agent was a very charming individual, who promised me my visa if I, in return, would write some articles condemning the conduct of the French coloured troops in the German occupied territories. When I replied that I did not do that kind of bargaining, he took his rebuff as a matter of course.

After nearly three months of waiting in London, I transferred my operations to Riga. Here an intensified campaign of three weeks secured me permission to enter with no conditions made or implied, and in October, 1921, I arrived in Moscow.

I had made up my mind that as far as possible I would judge the revolution as a whole and not from separate incidents, and I would not allow isolated horrors or abuses to prejudice my mind. I knew that revolutions cannot be made without acts of cruelty and violence, and history had taught

me that the more terrible the suffering of the people, the more violent would be their uprising against it.

I had seen something of Czarist Russia during various visits in the days before the War, and, like most foreigners, had acquired a very real affection for its people and a distrust of the abuses and the corruption of the old Russian autocracy.

During my first six months in Soviet Russia, pity swallowed up all other feelings. The sight of Moscow, with its glory gone, with shuttered shops in the main streets and armies of piteous refugees around the railway stations, was heart-breaking. I found a city overrun with rats and disease, a shortage of every necessity of life, and misery indescribable. But bad as Moscow was, its conditions were enviable to those in the famine regions of the Volga and in Siberia, where I found my way. In the city of Buzuluk I met again my old friend Dr. Farrar. There was a party of four of us visiting the city, bent on relief work—Dr. Nansen, Dr. Farrar, Mr. Kenworthy, head of the American Friends Relief, and myself. Thousands of refugees were flocking in from the country and people were dying in the streets. Mothers had abandoned their babies and fathers had forsaken their families. Famine and typhus were slaying their hosts. In the great cemetery, I asked the guardian how many famine victims they buried each day. "We do not count them," he said. "They come in cartloads." And he took me to the further end of the cemetery and showed me the great pits full to the top with naked bodies of the newly dead—naked, for clothing was much too valuable to be spared for any but the living. Dr. Farrar died, a martyr to duty, because of his work that day at Buzuluk, and Mr. Kenworthy nearly died.

Many of the villages around were even worse than Buzuluk. We came to some where the people, half-demented by hunger, had taken to cannibalism in such an amazing and repulsive form, that I dare not tell it here, lest you turn from this book in utter loathing.

When I sent back descriptions to England and America of what I had seen, some people were inclined to be angry. One old friend cabled remonstrances, urging me not to write in a way calculated to create sympathy for the Russians. I replied to him in language which I trust was fitting, even though it did contain a reference to a place warmer than Singapore, which I invited him to visit!

My old friend's cable did me a good turn. It and my

reply passed through the hands of the Soviet censors and helped to convince them that I was not there with a venial pen.

In April I was back in London. Mr. Evelyn Wrench, whose work for Imperial consolidation and Anglo-American friendship needs no praise of mine, invited me to tell the members of the Overseas League and of the English Speaking Union about what I had seen. Both audiences, without even a request from me, opened their purses. "Can't we do something to help?" called a man from the gallery at the close of the Overseas League meeting. "Let us take up a collection!" The money voluntarily raised at these two meetings was passed to Miss Ruth Fry, head of the admirable relief work of the English Quakers, and enabled a district in Russia to be relieved during the trying months ahead.

I returned to Moscow as permanent correspondent of the Chicago *Daily News*, a journal which treated me, throughout my stay in Russia, with great liberality and helped me in every possible way. Mr. Victor Lawson, its proprietor, one of the newspaper kings of our age, was a man of great administrative skill, high ideals and broad vision. He left me free, and let me write freely what I pleased. Mr. Charles Dennis, the Editor, stands in my memory as an ideal chief.

The Communist authorities gave me unusual freedom in travelling throughout the Soviet State. They knew that I had no sympathy with their political or economic views, but they believed that I did try to present their case honestly, and not to distort it. On my side, while seeing much that was bad, I strove to make allowances, and to interpret this new movement to the West.

My attempts aroused considerable resentment, particularly in England. "The friend of robbers and murderers," an angry peer once described me. "He explains away everything," said a dissenting editor. Such attacks naturally inclined to strengthen me in the line that I had taken.

Good fortune stood by me. On one occasion, when visiting the session of the Central Executive Committee (virtually the Russian Parliament) in the ancient palace of the Czars in the Kremlin, I chanced to be in the central line, with Lenin, Kaminev, Zinoviev and other leaders when the group was photographed. The picture was widely circulated, and hung in administrative offices throughout the country. It served me many a turn, More than once, when provincial

officials hesitated to grant me some opportunity I desired, I glanced at the wall, and modestly called their attention to the fact that I was in the historic group. The more formal title of address, "Grashdanin" (Citizen), would suddenly change to the more cordial "Tovarisch" (Comrade). "YOU were photographed with Vladimir Ilyitch!" (Lenin). All then would be well!

Of course there were difficulties. I did not spare criticisms, but these were allowed—although sometimes only after a battle royal. "The correspondents we do not like are those who say fair things to our faces and abuse us when they leave Russia," said one Censor to me. On one occasion it seemed that I had gone too far. Some of my despatches having been mauled in Moscow, I took a week-end off to Poland, and sent them fully from there. On my return, there was dire talk of what was ahead of me, and I was warned that arrest was possible. In the end, the Government relaxed its censorship rules. My colleagues of six nations formed a Society of Journalists in Russia and elected me President, but the Government would not legalize our corporate existence.

Stupid minor officials were at times a hindrance as they always have been in Russia. Occasional incidents roused me to passionate wrath and provoked hot protest. Like all foreigners who live for any time in Russia, I was subject to the secret supervision of the political police. But these were matters of trifling importance. Of the Soviet officials with whom I came in frequent contact, I hold many pleasant and happy recollections. Mr. Gregory Weinstein, of the Foreign Office, is a man of transparent sincerity, who showed, by the obvious sacrifices which he made for his cause, the genuineness of his convictions. Mr. Weinstein, as all the world knows, was Stellenbosched by his Government because he had to sign—I doubt if he was responsible for—an impolite letter to the British Agent during the Curzon controversy. His assistant, Mr. Kaghan, an able young American Jew, should go far in administration. Mr. Theodore Rothstein, Mr. Weinstein's successor, formerly a political journalist in Fleet Street, then Bolshevist Minister to Persia, never treated me with anything but consideration, despite his Anglophobe tendencies, even during our final stormy interview before my departure.

What was it then that made me, more than three years

after my arrival in Moscow, take steps which I knew would ensure either my imprisonment or my exclusion from the country? It was no single incident, but the cumulative effect of many. I had believed at the beginning that the Communist Government would gradually allow the fury of class war to die away, and this hope was encouraged by the introduction of Lenin's New Economic Policy. I found to my great disappointment that, so far from permitting it to die down, the Government carefully and deliberately did all in its power to keep it alive.

Next, I was chilled by the re-introduction of the Czarist exile system and by the cruelly severe manner in which it was applied. Many people within the circle of my own acquaintance, whose lives I knew well, were secretly arrested and sent to distant parts without trial. None was a conspirator against the Government. All that could be said of the most guilty among them, was that he or she did not actively sympathize with the ideals of the Communist party.

But the chief factor was the methods used by the Soviet Government in its campaign against religion. Among my friends were many prominent Churchmen, leaders of both the Orthodox and the Living Church. The Patriarch himself, who occasionally talked with me with the door of his cell closed, would tell, quietly, gently and simply, of his hopes and aims. Some of these Churchmen had, in the days of the Civil War, been on the White side, but since the Communists had acquired power, they had submitted to it, and I am satisfied that they submitted honestly. This did not save them from deliberate, malignant and sustained persecution.

The atmosphere of fear throughout the land stifled me. People did not dare even to think freely. When men and women reached once more the borders of Poland or Latvia, they felt as though they had stepped outside prison gates, for all Russia seemed one great prison. There was no free press, no freedom of meeting, no freedom of debate.

I explained the situation in a detailed letter to my Editor, a letter written in such terms that were it discovered it would cut short my freedom in the Soviet State. How was my message to be sent out? The mails were strictly censored, and it would be folly to use them. A young American business man was leaving Leningrad by boat, and I was about to ask him to carry my envelope, when my sixth sense—a necessary sense for men who do my work—restrained me. My intuition

was fortunate, for before his departure the young American was searched to the skin.

Then an old friend, Mr. MacCallum Scott, the well-known writer and Liberal politician who had joined Labour, came to my aid. We had studied things together and were in substantial agreement, and when he left for London, my despatch was in his pocket.

Arrived at the frontier station on the Soviet side of the border, Mr. Scott's luggage was examined, and the usual question put to him, "Have you any letters that you are taking out?" "Yes, I have," replied he, with apparent frankness. A fellow traveller remonstrated, but MacCallum Scott turned gravely to him. "My friend," said he, slowly and solemnly, "honesty's the best of policy. Never forget it! Honesty's the best of policy."

Some harmless letters were produced, and the official called another, higher up, who read them and handed them back. When half an hour later the frontier was crossed and they were in Latvian territory, MacCallum Scott put his hand in his inner pocket, and brought out my despatch. "My friend," said he, still solemnly, to his companion. "Did I not tell you, honesty's the best of policy."

Poor MacCallum Scott! The tragic death of himself and his wife in an aeroplane crash in British Columbia has left a gap in the lives of many of us!

The accounts that reached me, through various sources, of the condition of the religious and political exiles, were so bad that I made a journey to the European Arctic and to Central Siberia, to see for myself how the exiles were living. What I saw is described in later chapters.

Back once more in Moscow, I debated about what I should do. I was leaving for a visit to London the following week, and it would be easy to bottle my facts until I arrived there. But since my aim was not so much to arouse my readers abroad as to bring betterment to suffering people in Russia itself, I decided against this, wrote out my story fully, and sent it to the Censor with this accompanying letter:

> My dear Kaghan,
>
> I think it juster to you, and more in keeping with my own self-respect, to tell you here the results of my investigations into the Russian exile system, rather than to wait until I am abroad.

Hence the enclosed cablegram, which I ask you to pass for publication.

I will with the utmost willingness despatch to my paper any counter statement your authorities may desire to make to me, and if necessary will delay my departure abroad for a day or two for that purpose.

Soviet Russia, the great advocate of internationalism, has ever preached the lesson that where the cause of humanity urges, no craven fear of interference in the affairs of another nation must keep one silent.

Your own people are afraid to speak. "I am afraid", are the words that I hear from many men and women. Hear me, then, when I speak for them.

Yours very sincerely.

There is no need to describe the storm that followed. I was not surprised that my despatch startled and angered the official world. My friends were surprised when, a few days later, I was allowed to leave Russia.

But I am not permitted to return. If the authorities believed, however, that by this means they were preventing me from keeping in touch with the religious and political situation in their land, they were wrong.

CHAPTER II

I ACCUSE!

I CHARGE the Communist Government of Russia with deliberate, systematic and sustained persecution of religion, persecution more odious, more severe and more widespread than the world has witnessed for centuries. In the Dark Ages, many Governments persecuted some religions. This Government persecutes all religion.

What do I mean by persecution? The Communist Government is avowedly anti-religious, and for it to use its influence within wide limits to destroy religion cannot be called persecution, however much we may dislike and regret it. The anti-religious parades and processions in Moscow and other Russian cities are exceedingly offensive and in very bad taste, but they are not persecution. The cartoons and letterpress of *Bezboznik* (Without God), the clever, scurrilous, virtually official organ of atheism, are merely an offence. We may dislike and regret these things and the violent and often disgusting attacks on faith in Bolshevist literature, in the Bolshevist press and on Bolshevist platforms, but these men have the same right to state and defend their case as we have to state and defend our own. When I find operas like Faust, so changed and staged at the Bolshoi theatre in Moscow under official orders as to make them into nagging and niggling sneers at religion, I regret it, if only from an artistic point of view. I yawn wearily when I have to sit through a classical comic opera into which vast and dreary masses of propaganda have been injected.

I do not like these things and do not profess to like them. They are often in the most execrable taste and are gratuitously offensive to the vast majority of people, but if the Bolshevist dictators like to run their propaganda on offensive and vulgar lines, that is their affair.

By persecution, I mean the direct infliction of penalties on people because of their faith, and the denial of the rights of advocacy and defence of their religion.

This persecution is not occasional, incidental or limited. It is carried out as a carefully planned campaign throughout the land and its aim is to destroy faith, if needs be by force.

The only system of education open to the children is in Government schools and no private teaching is permitted. In these schools, religion is systematically ridiculed and attacked. There is no "conscience clause" allowing children, whose parents do not agree, to abstain from attending.

The child of religious parents finds it difficult, and in many cases impossible, to obtain facilities for higher education. He or she is largely excluded from the Universities and higher technical schools.

Religious people are denied the right of class teaching for their children in religion under the age of eighteen. This prohibition goes so far that many priests fear to visit the families of their flock, lest they should be charged with propaganda among the children.

The Russian Government is guilty of persecution of the rank and file of religious worshippers. No member of the Communist party, the governing party of the State, is allowed to take part in any religious ceremony and the Communist who is married in Church is expelled from the party. People who are prominent in religious work run a very great danger of expulsion from their employment, even in its humblest forms. The Government is guilty of persecution in depriving priests, rabbis, ministers of religion and, in many cases, lay preachers, of citizenship. It has robbed churches of their legitimate rights. Organized religion is as far as possible fettered and bound. A church or religious group is not allowed to have any central fund for collecting voluntary donations or for making a levy. Its members must not form mutual aid societies or co-operative institutions or workshops. It must not give any material aid to its members and it is equally forbidden to exercise charity to those outside its ranks. Bible study circles and even sewing circles are forbidden. Prayer meetings for young women, adolescents and children are a crime. A religious society must not open lending libraries or reading rooms, maintain sanatoria, or give medical advice or aid. It cannot invite preachers from the outside to come to it, for preachers are restricted to the local congregations.

The Government runs a department of state, whose sole purpose is to control with a view to destroy religion, and this department has caused and is causing the arrest and imprison-

ment of many thousands of religious leaders and active workers, sending them into exile under conditions inhuman in their severity. Many have died and many and still more have had their lives completely ruined.

It has deliberately evicted from their homes and driven to beggary multitudes whose only offence was their belief in God. It has shot many because of their faith. It is to-day holding multitudes of religious men and women in captivity or exile, for no other reason than that they refuse to renounce God.

It has denied and is denying Justice to thousands of Christian men and women deprived of liberty under its laws. It has revived the Czarist method of arrest and punishment by administrative decree, under which people can be secretly seized, imprisoned and exiled, without even being informed of the charges against them, or given any opportunity for fair defence.

It spares neither age nor youth, neither woman nor girl. Veteran Churchmen nearly eighty years of age have been taken from loathsome underground cells to die from lack of sufficient clothing and lack of food in the Arctic and amid the fierce cold of Central Siberia. Compared with them, the men and the women who have been shot for their faith in the underground cellars of Loubyanka in Moscow, Gorokhovaia in Leningrad, or many another prison, may be deemed fortunate.

The Government defends its cruelty and oppression by the usual arguments of persecuting tyrants. It pleads, first, the ancient corruption of the Orthodox Greek Church.

That corruption I neither excuse nor deny. It was one of the vile fruits of Czarism, but to punish the Orthodox Church to-day, when it has cleansed its skirts, for the crimes and mistakes of the Czarist officials of another age, is neither justice nor common-sense. And to extend this persecution to all branches of religion is the best proof that this plea is not a reason but an excuse.

The Government pleads that it punishes for political not religious reasons.

This is the plea of religious persecutors in all ages.

Jesus Christ was crucified for political reasons.

The early Christian martyrs were punished for political offences against Rome.

And so it has gone on through the centuries.

The excuse of political offence is the stalest and most threadbare pretext of anti-religious fanaticism.

I declare, knowing many of the people who have been punished to death and exile, that their dominating motive has been religious, not political. Some of them fought against the Communists in the days of the Civil War, but since Communism has become the established Government of the land, they have been prepared to obey it in all things civil, only asking it to leave alone the rights of religion. Religious leaders of all faiths but especially leaders of the Orthodox Greek and of the Catholic Church, from the Patriarch Tikhon downwards, have assured me of this under circumstances which give no room to question their sincerity.

CHAPTER III

IS THIS PERSECUTION?

"WHEN shall we be able again to worship God without fear?" the woman asked me, with tears in her eyes. She glanced up at the sacred Ikon hanging in the corner of her room, and there came a sudden deep irrepressible sob. "Only God can help us," she murmured.

I had seen her months before in prison, confined in a cell with a woman charged with a foul crime. Her offence was that she had been a prominent Church worker—nothing more. Her husband, once a popular priest, had been in prison on a hard labour sentence for two years, on a trumped-up charge connected with his church work. Her children were marked as "wolves," to be given no public employment.

This woman looked like a dear old Berkshire housewife, with her grey hair, her spectacles and her simple manner. But in the eyes of the authorities she was a dangerous subject and was treated accordingly.

In a provincial town I set out for the address of an Archbishop, overlord of a thousand churches and widely known for his piety and learning. I found so poor a cottage that I thought I must have been misdirected. Opening the door I saw a filthy room occupied by a labourer and his wife and children. The labourer directed me to the adjoining door.

Here was the apartment allotted by the authorities to the ecclesiastic. It was packed with his books, his wooden bed being in one corner and his one or two simple cooking utensils in another. The old man could not afford a fire, although it was a cold November day, and was wrapped in a thick overcoat. He was bent over a table laboriously doing routine tasks of his Church, for he was not permitted to have a secretary, messenger or other assistant.

He had been out that afternoon trying to sell some of his books, in order to send relief to another Bishop who had been exiled and was starving. He had been imprisoned more than once and expected to be sent back soon.

"Every night as 12 o'clock comes round I listen for the steps of the police," he said. "That is the hour they always come for me."

In Novo-Nikolaievsk, Siberia, I sought out the old church. There was difficulty in finding it for the persecution against the orthodox there was very strong. All the Orthodox Churches had been taken save one. By patient inquiry I came, however, to an old building that had once been a bakehouse, where the faithful, turned out of their own splendid Church, were worshipping. In place of the great shining cross over their old home they had made a cross of wood shavings, which hung over their door.

In Krasnoyarsk I tried to find a Church and followers of the Patriarch. I was told that there was no Church left where the orthodox could worship. The authorities had taken all from them. One priest had been sent into exile. Others had been compelled to keep silence.

I had the name of a priest there, but for some hours I sought him in vain. Then, down in a back street, I asked a workman, whose face looked strangely incongruous, if he could tell me where this priest lived. The man trembled violently and turned to me with terror in his face.

"Who told you my name?" he demanded. "What do you want with me?"

He thought that I was a police agent and he was afraid to speak. He was the priest, but he had been compelled by the local police to sign a paper that he would no longer serve as a priest and was working in a local factory as a labourer for 30s. a month. He knew that in the same city one prominent priest had been taken from his large family of children not long before and sent into exile to a desolate spot in the Angara, for his church activity.

A month before this, I had been in a northern city. There I sought out the wife of a priest I had known in exile in the Arctic. At first she was frightened, thinking that I was another police agent come to make one of their periodical searches of her house. Bit by bit she told me her story. Her husband had been sent into exile, the only reason being, as far as they could discover, that he was the best priest in the district and had the most numerous following. He was suffering much in the Arctic and she could do little for him, for she had a big family dependent on her. She burst into tears as she told her tale.

The youngest children in the family were being excluded from the local school because the father was an exile. Her elder children could not find work. They were barred from employment for the same reason.

"I do not want anything for myself," she said, "but could you do something for my husband? Is there any way you could help my children to get education?" She was one of hundreds in similar plight.

Passing through Chita, I interviewed the Bishop of the district. He had been kept for a long time in prison, was released by Kalinin when that great Commissar travelled through Siberia, re-arrested by the ocal police and released once more after six months. I found the Bishop cheerful and hopeful. He talked happily about his gaolers and told me how, immediately he was released, he set out on a great preaching campaign throughout his diocese. He impressed me as a scholar and a brave gentleman.

"When I was in prison, my family was given permission to visit me every day," he said. "I was even allowed a private cell, until the crowded state there rendered it impossible. After my release I visited over ninety churches in my diocese. Everywhere the churches were crowded, the people displaying deep devotion. The crowds showered their welcome on me, took me from place to place and entertained me. Their spiritual fervour was greater than I ever before witnessed. While it is true that the Church has lost wealth, rank and official position, such loss will in the end prove a gain. The situation before us presents many difficulties, calling for tact, wisdom and adaptation in non-essentials." And the Bishop went on to tell me how he was doing everything that he could to work in accord with the authorities, everything, that is, which is permitted to a faithful Christian, loyal to his creed.

Some time afterwards, I asked some friends how the Bishop was getting on. "He has been arrested again," they said. "This time, they have taken him to the Loubyanka prison in Moscow." "What has he done?" I asked. "He is a Bishop," came the reply. "Isn't that reason enough!"

They called themselves the "Circle of Brothers," Krujok Britisco. They had come together soon after the second revolution when the Churches, without money to pay for cleaning or lighting, or to hire lay helpers, were rapidly falling into decay. These men and women (for in Russian way the

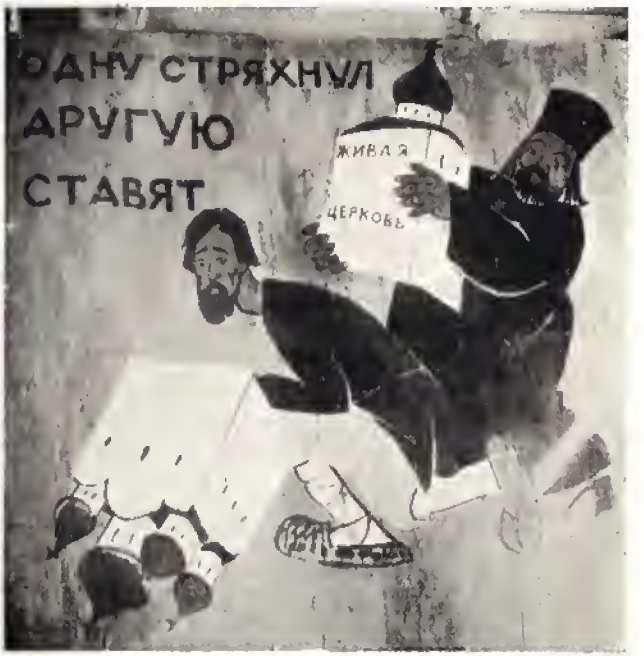


Photo: F. A. Mackenzie]

"HE SHAKES OFF ONE. ANOTHER'S PUT ON HIM"

Cartoon in St. Pimen's Church, Moscow, intended to show how the Living Church imposed itself on the peasant after he had overthrown the old Church

"IF IT IS THE WILL OF GOD THAT I SHOULD DIE, I DIE AS A TRUE CHRISTIAN."
(Archbishop Benjamin before the Soviet Court)

Brotherhood embraced both sexes) united first with the idea of keeping the church buildings in repair by voluntary labour. From this humble beginning a considerable popular movement arose. The Brotherhood described itself as a circle for the study of the Word of God, for service, obedience and prayer.

To join the Brotherhood, you had to be between the ages of 18 and 40. You were required to be of the Christian faith, able to read and write, a non-smoker and a non-drinker, working without shirking and obeying the directions of the head of the Circle and of his deputy.

Members had to devote their spare time to labours of love, visit the sick, care for the dying, tend children and help to bury the dead. They were required to live in simplicity, cleanliness and harmony, to deal frankly with one another and to help each other as much as they could in the untiring study of the Word of God. Each member must own a Testament and, if possible, a Bible. They were to be slaves of Christ, to attempt difficult deeds, prayers and work, to cultivate a holy love and the fear of God in their hearts, and "through their faith and zeal for all virtues, to deserve the coming of the Holy Spirit and to be freed from all passions, that they might serve God and their neighbours."

The Brotherhood spread rapidly and did a fine work of charity. Then the Government became alarmed, arrested its leaders and dispersed the members. That, so far as I was able to learn, was the end of this Circle of Brothers.

I was not altogether surprised when one day I received a message that the police had ordered the suppression of the Salvation Army in Russia, asking me if I could help. The story of the coming of the Salvationists is a romance in itself. In Czarist days, when religious organizations outside the State Church were mostly prohibited, some Finnish Army lassies, who knew Russia well, watched their opportunity to get in. There was an exhibition in Petrograd and they succeeded in obtaining permission to have a stall showing the social work of the Salvation Army. When the Exhibition was over they remained at their own risk, and when the first Revolution granted Russia religious freedom, General Booth quickly dispatched one of his chief officers, Commissioner Mapp, with a little band of helpers. Then came the Bolshevist revolution, and the few Salvationists who were left underwent appalling hardships. They starved often. Some of

them were imprisoned and some fell ill. Even in their darkest hours they gathered homeless children in their lodgings in Petrograd and gave them shelter and food from their own rations of a little bit of black bread and a drink of herring soup.

When Lenin relaxed Communist severity in 1921 the Salvationists began afresh. Then came the order of expulsion. I had some difficulty in finding their home in a poor quarter of Moscow. They told me how police agents had come and sealed their hall, forbidden them to visit their people and threatened them with arrest. "We would close every church if we could," said one of the men as he fixed the seals. "We can't do that yet, but we can close yours and we will."

I tried to soften the official heart. Dr. Nansen helped me by giving me a letter saying that the Salvation Army was not a political organization, took no part in politics and had, to his knowledge, done much good work among the poor people in other countries. I succeeded in reaching a high official with my plea. "These Salvationists have been guilty of a very serious offence," he said. "They have been feeding day by day a number of children in Petrograd."

"Yes," I said innocently. "Wasn't it splendid of them? There is an awful lot of hungry children there and I know these girls almost starve themselves to help."

The high official looked at me queerly and not very amiably. "Do you not know," he demanded hotly, bringing his hand down on the table to emphasize his words, "that this is an offence against the State? Religious organizations are forbidden to try to bribe people to become religious." So the Salvation Army had to go!

One of my first experiences of the campaign against religion was in Petrograd, where I had invited myself to attend a meeting of a branch of the Communist party attached to the Foreign Office. The gathering was called to hear the report of a "cleansing" committee and to decide the fate of those accused. Among the members of the party it was proposed to discipline was a young girl clerk who had not long before been married in Church. To use the Church or anything is a crime among Communists.

I had met this girl at her work inside the Foreign Office, where she was one of the most efficient of the junior staff.

Now, she was arraigned before her comrades and told to go and wait in the corridor while we discussed what was to become of her. Opinion was divided. There were some who proposed that the strict laws of the party should be modified in this case. She was a good girl and a good worker. Why be too severe about her little lapse? One doctor, however, fresh from America, opposed lenience. "Priests are on one side," said he. "We are on the other. She has chosen her side. Let her go to it."

They called her back. "If you had a child," said one cross-examiner, "would you have it christened?" The girl looked up proudly. "I decline to discuss such a question," she said. In the end, they turned her out of the party. To be turned out of the party at that time meant a loss of food rations and of rights to lodgings, which made expulsion a very bad blow.

CHAPTER IV

CAPTURING THE NEW GENERATION

I PLACE the compulsory teaching of the children of religious people in Russia in atheism as foremost among the wrongs done to them. This does not involve the active physical torment of the more ostensible persecution, but it means a deeper moral wrong. A minority of the nation, having secured the power of government, compels, so far as is in its power, the majority to surrender the souls of its children.

Atheism is actively taught in all schools, except a few in outlying parts where teachers and parents have secretly agreed to defy the orders of the authorities.

Teachers must give instruction in anti-religion or lose their places. This often means, under present economic conditions, beggary.

The children of religious parents are virtually forced to attend repulsive and disgusting anti-God demonstrations and exhibitions.

Religious committees are forbidden the right to give young people class instruction in their faith. Sunday Schools are prohibited. Bible study circles are illegal.

The threat hangs over parents that if they resist their children will be taken from them and handed over to real proletarian foster-parents, or taken into public institutions, where they will be taught to regard Lenin as their father, Reason as their mother, and Stalin as their Pope.

"Concentrate your main attention on the rising generation," is the Communists' slogan. "Capture the children and religion will die out in the land naturally in a few years."

"I don't mind the older men and women," said one prominent Communist to me, when I told him that numbers of people who were formerly sceptical were now returning to their faith. "We cannot hope to convert them for they are set in their ways. Let them go to their mumbo-jumbos, to their gipsy sorcerers, their sacraments or services, as they

please. The coming generation is ours. The old will die out and their superstition will disappear with them."

Had Communism confined itself to propaganda, in its attempts to capture the children, we would have no reasonable cause for complaint, much as we might for regret. But it has gone beyond that. It employs the harshest legal compulsion.

The law prohibiting the class teaching of young people under the age of eighteen in religion was widened in an official circular issued on January 3rd, 1922, of which the following is a summary:

> The teaching of religion to children of school age, in churches, in other ecclesiastical buildings, or in private houses, is hereby forbidden.
>
> Theological instruction for individuals over eighteen years of age who are able to discuss religious questions intelligibly can be authorized in special establishments opened by permission of the Soviet authorities.
>
> Collective teaching and isolated relations with young people under the age of eighteen, no matter where carried on, will be prosecuted with all the rigour of revolutionary law.

The penalty laid down was one year's imprisonment. But in actual practice, the offender is usually charged with counter-revolutionary activity, a crime for which death can be inflicted. Ten years' imprisonment is not unusual. The common punishment for a murderer is six years' imprisonment. In effect, to be a Sunday School teacher is to commit a more serious crime than murder! This, surely, is a paradox of stiff-necked fanaticism.

Parents are allowed to teach their own children religion, or to bring in the children of neighbours to the number of three altogether. But no more.

There are no private schools in Russia to-day; all are State-directed and controlled. British defenders of Communism maintain that the teaching is merely non-religious. "Anti-religious education consists in simple teaching in the natural sciences," said one correspondent in the *Manchester Guardian*. This is wholly wrong, as the study of the manuals of Russian education, or observation in the schools themselves, will show.

On this point I am happily able to call the evidence of an authority who certainly cannot be accused of bias against Communists, Miss Susan Lawrence, Under-Secretary of

the Ministry of Health in the Labour Government, and herself an educational expert, visited Moscow in 1923, and made a careful study of education. She wrote :—

"The schools are as I have said, propaganda schools, framed to inculcate a definite ideal both in politics and religion.

"Communism is to be taught and religion is to be exterminated, and the whole programme of the schools is to be directed towards these ends. Exactly as the lessons in revolutionary history, and elementary economics, have as their object the reiteration of a political theory, so the lessons in natural history, the theory of evolution, and the comparative history of religion, have as their object establishing firmly the outlook on the world of say Huxley or Mr. Bradlaugh. It follows, as is always the case with dogmatic education, that there can be no free play of thought, and in particular, there is no room in the system for any teacher who does not think as the State does. A teacher who was not a Communist or who was a professing Christian I am pretty sure would have to hide his opinion or lose his job as certainly as would be the case with a convinced atheist in a Catholic school in England. I am inclined to think that the stories in England of dismissals on account of religious opinions are probably true."

The professional magazines of the teachers are full of discussions of how best to destroy the anti-religious instinct among children. It is generally agreed that the religious work must begin when the child enters school and must be carried on till the end. The first stage is to disperse all fears of ghosts, goblins and witches and to treat belief in God or Christ on the same level. As the children grow older, different arguments are used. Some teachers urge dwelling on the cost of religion how the money spent for the Church could be well used to repair bridges and roads and how the price of candles burnt in the churches would provide so many shoes for children. If it was not for the money given to the priest, the children are urged to believe, they could buy a tractor or threshing machine, or have a motor bus to connect their village with the railway. In the study of history, the saintly claims of all the most notorious characters in Russian history are dwelt on, and the fact implied that saintliness and scoundrelism generally go together. Sometimes the health argument is used, and children are told how diphtheria can be contracted by the use of the host in communion, or syphilis spread by the Easter kiss customary in the Orthodox Church.

The most varied anti-religious demonstrations are arranged, which the children are expected to attend. Possibly an Anti-God train, specially manned by a group of propagandists and containing all manner of foul and violent attacks on God and Christ, will arrive at a country village. Woe to the father who keeps his children away! He will be a marked man.

Under the law, children can be taken from their parents when this would be in the interests of the children. A dreadful fear weights the heart of many fathers and mothers that a threat which has been freely uttered among Communists may be put into execution, and the children of parents who are not of working-class birth or of atheist principles be taken from them. This, it is only fair to say, is on the lines of an old, cruel Czarist law.

The corporate life of schools centres in the Communist societies attached to them, the Pioneers, the Young Leninists, and the Young Communists' League. These are, in effect, the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides of Russia, but as is usual there, they are not two separate organizations, the boys and girls drilling and playing together everywhere. Any boy or girl who wants to be in the real life of the school must join the Pioneers and, in doing so, becomes a pledged Young Communist.

One finds these Pioneers and Young Communists' League bands everywhere, marching and drilling in the evenings, on holidays and Sundays. Most of the boys and girls in the ranks wear red 'kerchiefs. They march, especially on parade occasions, with a very minimum of clothing. Around their societies gather all the fun and all the enterprise and enthusiasm of child life in their district. There could be no opposition attractions; the police would quickly stop them. The boy or girl who does not want to be a molly-coddle naturally joins the Pioneers.

They are taught discipline, drill and physical fitness. They are taught to stand upright and obey orders. In their clubhouses—they have the pick of the finest buildings in the neighbourhood—they have plays, dances and music. In return for all this, much of it excellent and admirable from a physical point of view, they are made into sound little Communists. They are soaked in Marxism; they are taught Communist songs and sing them as they march along, they are taught to hate priests; in country towns when they see

one they hoot at him. They have picnics, excursions and summer camps; the child of religious parents has none.

Parents who feel most strongly against Communism find that this propaganda is stealing the hearts of their children from them. One of the most famous of the younger intellectuals in Russia mourned over this to me. "My children are gradually absorbing a point of view that is not mine," he said. "Day by day they are taught in school that all the bourgeoisie are oppressors and enemies of the people. In the end they come to believe this to be true. They absorb materialistic philosophy from the atmosphere around them. One cannot fight an atmosphere."

It is usual to give very high praise to the Communist system of education. I was at first somewhat nervous of dissenting from this, feeling that with so many experts uniting in one voice, I must be wrong in not supporting them. Now I find that others are more and more agreeing with me. The Communist zeal for education has its admirable aspects. The campaign against adult illiteracy, carried on with all the force of Lenin's zeal behind it, did much good so far as it went. The system of education carried on in the general schools during the first eight or nine years of Communism impressed me, however, as being inadequate, badly planned and often badly carried out. The teachers were under-paid, and many of them untrained; there was a lack of discipline and many of the schemes of instruction seemed to be crude adaptations of incompletely-mastered foreign reform ideas. What is more, the number of children at school and the number of schools for many years were less under Communism than in the Czarist days immediately before the Great War.

The plan adopted by the Soviet Government late in 1922 of transferring the main cost of education from the central to local authorities and making these responsible, has led in many districts to inefficient schools, bad school buildings and poor teaching. I am dealing now, of course, with the vast number of schools in the provinces, not the more or less show establishments in cities like Moscow and Leningrad.

The schools are restricted to a narrow range of thought. All books, papers and magazines are severely censored, and not only are religious books forbidden, but large numbers of volumes, the perusal of which might broaden the outlook of the children, are on the Index. Even if Darwin's portrait is put up in many schools, Darwin's works come under the

Censors' hands. A Communist edition of the "Voyage of the Beagle" had several excisions made. The censorship of books for general circulation is strict and strictly enforced. Classics are edited to make them fit in with the Communist idea. If they cannot be edited, they are suppressed. Among prohibited philosophers are Kant, Plato, Descartes, Herbert Spencer and Schopenhauer, Carlyle, Prince Kropotkin; Maeterlinck, Nietsche and Tolstoy fall under the ban. William James and Marie Corelli, Dean Farrar, Samuel Smiles and Flammarion, are all on the Index.

The Communist authorities do not believe in letting the young people hear the other side. The ban against independent schools is stretched even to include commercial classes where shorthand is taught, these having been taken over by the Government.

When the Communists first obtained power, a plan was advocated of taking all children from their parents at the age of 2 or 3 and bringing them up in institutions. As a matter of theory, many orthodox Communists still believe in this. But, as a matter of practice, it has been found utterly impossible. A number of children's homes were opened, but these were at once filled with orphans, homeless, and the children of war victims. These schools vary enormously in efficiency. In some cases, owing to neglect of the local authorities, the children are almost starved. In others, the very reverse is true and the local Communist leaders heap all the good things they can on them. I would be unfair if I did not add that I found the majority of these children's homes run with great humanity and kindness.

One of the most hopeful sides of Russia to-day is the life in the Universities and higher educational institutions. As far as possible, the privilege of attending these is kept for the children of workers, and the old middle-classes are either barred altogether or charged such high fees that they cannot afford to enter. There are special "rabfacs"—workers' colleges—where picked young workers are given further education to enable them to enter the Universities, the standard having been lowered to help them.

It would seem logical to conclude that the system of child training now enforced must make the next generation of Russians solidly Communist. But here the authorities have already discovered that this mechanized system does not always work as expected.

The young people, eager, enthusiastic and full of life, have a knack of breaking away from orthodoxy, however carefully they have been trained. It has been found necessary in many Universities to have each year a clearance of students who have developed doubtful doctrines, and often enough, as Communists themselves mournfully admit, it is the cleverest students who are expelled. In short, you cannot put the human mind into a mould and keep it fixed. The closer and more rigid the mould, the greater the human tendency to break away. And Communism is a very rigid intellectual mould indeed.

Some of my happiest hours have been spent with groups of University students discussing the world and world affairs.

Here are some notes taken at the time of an evening's talk with a group of University students in a provincial city. They had invited me to have supper with them, a simple but very happy meal, and for many hours afterwards, discussion went on. There had recently been a great *cheesta*, a clearance of students at Leningrad University, when scores of young people of middle-class descent had been expelled by workers' committees, a number of them committing suicide in despair.

My friends told me what expulsion meant, of how, when a young man or woman is expelled from the University simply because of birth or religion, he or she receives what is popularly called a "Wolf's Passport," which bars you from all public employment, and makes you a marked subject. You are branded "bourgeois" and a social leper. Your taxes, your rent and the cost of your food are all augmented, and very likely you will be turned out of your room altogether, and have to leave the city.

The questions put to me by the students dealt mainly with the position of Communism abroad, the conditions of life in England and the British colonial system. The students revealed no special interest in American affairs. They were somewhat surprised at the figures I gave them about the decline of Communism outside Russia, and its comparative unimportance in the life of the British and American people. The figures, I told them, were taken not from foreign sources, but from their own official Communist Almanacs. A question about the amount of unemployment in England and the weekly payments to the unemployed, brought up the issue of British Imperial relations.

"Is it not true," one young man asked, "that the British worker benefits at the expense of the colonial worker, and that the worker in Britain can receive higher wages because the workers in your colonies are exploited?"

This compelled an explanation of the whole British colonial and Imperial system, the position of the self-governing Dominions, and the changing status of India. My friends fastened on one point, my assertion that England made no direct profit from her Empire, but rather a loss, and that her gains came indirectly from her commercial enterprise. I told how, for example, Britain bears by herself, alone, nearly the whole cost of Imperial defence, from which the Dominions benefit.

Why should England do this? It was not common sense, the young people insisted. England and America are the two most practical and businesslike nations in the world. It was absurd to suppose that England would do so foolish a thing. I ventured to suggest that the Englishman is at heart an idealist, that there are things he values more than money and that he is moved by other desires than gain. They mocked me. "It isn't true, it isn't true," they flung back. "If I were England," said another, "I would cut off all the colonies and save money." For generations, under Czar and Commune alike, they have absorbed this idea of grasping, calculating, greedy John Bull. Even the Great War did not clear their minds.

Then we passed to less controversial topics. One girl demanded to know about her favourite author, Jack London, and I had to tell about the days that Jack London and I spent together in Korea and Manchuria, the tale of his splendid youth and his tragic end. The two most read English writers in Russia to-day are Oscar Wilde and Jack London. O. Henry is another favourite. There was a time when Wells was much discussed in Russia, but his popularity has declined. The Russians say, rather cruelly, that he is a man of industry rather than of genius. Oscar Wilde owes his popularity, not to the unsavoury story of his fall, but to his beautiful, pellucid style, and to the fact that much of his writing has a general, permanent human appeal, rather than a contemporary and national one. Take, for example, his plea by the mother to the son in "A Woman of No Importance." It rings as true and comes as closely home to the Russian woman as it does to the American. Jack London

is loved because Russians love adventure stories, and believe him to be the prince of writers of that genre.

I paused for a moment to look around this students' dwelling-place. It was more luxurious than most, for it was once the home of a famous professor. Eight young people lived there, two girls and six men. The elder girl acted as housekeeper. They did most of the housework themselves and the rooms were quite well kept. The two girls were bright, full of fun, somewhat careless about personal adornment and much younger in spirit than their years. The men, in their close-fitting white blouses, looked typically Russian. There was a grand piano in the corner, a piano which had narrowly escaped official seizure. A skull, with many of the teeth still in it, ornamented one table and the eye sockets were used to hold spools of cotton. A happy crowd, despite poverty and *cheestas*. The danger of such a life is that some are apt to love it too much, to regard it as an end, rather than a brief interlude, and to develop into that most pitiful class, the professional student.

Even the doctored and de-hydrated courses in the Russian Universities of to-day, with their transformed history, materialistic philosophy and one-sided views of life, cannot prevent youth from stretching out to the unknown. For a young man or woman to think independently may be a very dangerous thing for an absolutist government, and there, one has cause for hope for the future.

CHAPTER V

EXILE!

THE revived exile system has proved a powerful weapon of the Soviet Government in its fight against religion. Here, Communism is following the footsteps of Czarism. In the old days, people were arrested at the will of the police by administrative order, held in prison for secret inquiry, possibly for years, and then banished without open trial to distant parts of the empire, usually Siberia or northern Russia. The story of these exiles moved the world, and with reason. Then, as now, the suffering of the victims was minimized and contradicted by the friends of officialism, who did their best to conceal the truth.

When word went forth at the beginning of the revolution that the exile system had been ended and all the political deportees were free to return, the world rejoiced, for freedom had taken a step forward. Men and women came back to Moscow and Petrograd as though they had risen from the dead. Some had been scores of years isolated in lonely, remote parts and often enough they found it hard to adapt their lives to the new world which had arisen in their absence.

In the early years of Communism, military control and the powers possessed by the political police were ample to deal with any suspected disaffection. The political police were constable, council, judge and executioner in one. They arrested whom they would, tried them themselves, sentenced them and carried out the sentence. They were free to judge, not according to any code of law, but as they thought right.

Then came the era of moderation, following the start of the New Economic Policy, when private enterprise was encouraged and life began to assume a more normal aspect. For a few months the moderate men were in control. Lenin backed and inspired them. "We went too fast," he told the Communist International. "The mistake was that we launched our transformation too fast. The peasants were against us."

Lenin fell ill and although, broken in health, he was preaching in this way, a strong section of the party was working in an opposite direction. The extremists were aided at the most critical moment by the failure of the Hague negotiation that would have restored Russia to her place among the Powers. A wave of alarm swept over the Communists. They saw life returning to its old ways, shops full of luxury goods, restaurants with costly meals, business men grouping together and professional men forming their unions. The very Menshevists were putting aside their ancient hostility and consenting to work with the Government. All these forces would be able, in the end, to combine and overthrow Communism!

Then it was that the Communists revived the exile system, following the Czarist method as closely as possible, legalizing the arrest of suspected persons, their imprisonment and their deportation to places within or without Russia by the order of a special commission, or, in other words, at the will of the political police. As already stated, these arrested people need not know the charge against them. They have no power to obtain independent legal advice or to call evidence on their own behalf.

It must be understood that people arrested and exiled in this fashion are not open political offenders, who are charged under the law, brought to trial and sentenced in open court. Deportees are people suspected of not being in sympathy with the Communist ideals, but against whom no open charges can be made. This is shown by statements by the Communist authorities. Kursky, the Commissar of Justice, made it quite clear in an interview that I had with him, and repeated it in a formal statement issued at a time of wholesale deportation from Moscow. "We bring to trial only persons who are concerned with organized plotting against the Government. We apply more revolutionary methods (i.e., exile) to persons regarded as merely dangerous, dealing with them in a quicker manner."

It was soon apparent that the exile system was to be no idle weapon in the hands of the Communist rulers. A few days before the decree was published, a number of prominent men were arrested in Moscow and Petrograd, including lawyers who had taken active part in defending political prisoners when placed on trial. Within a very short time, several hundred intellectuals in Moscow and Petrograd were placed under arrest and many others all over the country.

The authorities apparently set themselves to break up all scientific or social organizations that were not pronouncedly Communist. Day by day the list grew and has continued to grow from then until now. The least flurry outside is still followed by fresh batches of arrests. At first, those arrested were mainly intellectuals. Then came men of lesser degree, business men in particular being exiled in wholesale fashion.

But it is on the Churches that this policy of arrest and deportation has fallen most heavily. From Metropolitans to deacons, active leaders have disappeared on a great scale.

The first batches of professors and others were sent out of the country. Oddly enough, some of them had been seeking permission to go for a long time and had been refused. Suddenly they found themselves bundled out at a few days' notice.

After a few weeks, the Bolshevists awoke to the fact, which had been apparent to every outsider from the beginning, that in sending men of intellect out of Russia, they were simply establishing a number of able critics of Communism in different European Universities and centres of culture, to influence opinion against them. These critics would be the most influential of all, because they would be men who had done their best to work with the Communists for the sake of Russia and had not been permitted to continue.

Thereupon the Government changed its policy. Instead of sending the exiles out of Russia, it removed them to the European Arctic, northern Siberia and Turkestan, where they were placed under police control. In addition, others were sent into milder forms of exile, being removed from one city to another perhaps 200 or 300 miles away. Thus, leading Churchmen and professors in Vologda were ordered to go to Archangel and live there. The Bishop of Omsk was told to go to Tomsk. The Metropolitan of White Russia was commanded to make his home in Moscow instead of Minsk. I found him living humbly there.

In the Far East several thousand former Whites were arrested, imprisoned and deported, some to the far north, others to Europe.

I was in Chita and Vladivostok a few months after this clearing took place and witnessed the misery that it had brought. One example may suffice. One elderly gentlewoman came to me pleading earnestly that I find where her husband was. He had been taken for no known reason, had

been sent to the concentration camp of Novo-Nikolaievsk and from there had totally disappeared. Not a word had been heard from him.

"My husband is an old man," said the lady. "He needs me to look after him. I do not mind where he goes, I will follow if I can only learn where he is."

I may add that on my return to Moscow I did my utmost, at the Government department concerned, to discover what had become of the husband, but could learn nothing, despite repeated visits and despite the efforts of the officials there. He had just disappeared, like many and many another.

The Far East had been for some time a moderate Socialist republic, nominally independent, working in co-operation with Soviet Russia. This form of administration had been arranged to give Russia a certain political advantage in dealing with Japan and the European powers when discussing the Pacific question. The moment the need for such an independent state passed away, Moscow arranged a pacific revolution and the Far Eastern Republic joined Soviet Russia, all its moderate Socialist leaders being arrested and sent into exile. There was left behind a trail of broken homes, despairing parents and lonely wives.

What I saw in the Far East led me to make further investigation into the conditions under which the exiles lived. With that purpose in mind, I set out from Moscow for Archangel and the far north.

CHAPTER VI

ARCHANGEL

SOME travel books describe the journey from Moscow to Archangel as venturesome and exciting. Really there is no more excitement in it than in a journey between London and Aberdeen. The through train runs three times a week, and on one day a week it has an international car. One may step into the train at Moscow and quit it at Archangel.

There is a long enough stop at Vologda to enable one to walk through the city. One interesting feature in Vologda when I was there was the destruction of three great churches. They were being torn down by order of the authorities in order to make room for an institute, built as a memorial to Lenin. In the endeavour to suppress the old religion in Vologda, some priests had already been sent into exile.

Twenty-eight miles from Archangel I left to my right the town of Kholmogori. There, up to the spring of 1924, was one of the worst exile prisons. The ill-treatment of the prisoners was so great that the Soviet authorities finally closed the place. Some of the women political exiles told me one of their experiences. During the early winter of 1924 several of them were marched down through the winter snow from Archangel. With them were several criminals. The journey was exceedingly hard. Many of the people were very poorly clad and there was a great shortage of food.

When at last Kholmogori was reached the women politicals were put on one side and the women criminals were ordered to help in some work. They sullenly refused, saying that they were nearly dead and could do nothing. The guards bullied them and struck at them with their rifles, but the women persisted in their refusal.

Some soldiers came up with a machine gun and turned it in the direction of the women in the yard. When the gun faced their way, they were again urged to do as they were

told, but still, regarding the thing as an empty threat, they maintained their refusal. Then firing began. At the first explosions of the cartridges there arose a heart-rending cry for mercy.

"Pochadite! Pochadite!" the women shrieked. "Mercy! Mercy!" They fell on their knees and lifted their hands in prayer, but the machine gun fire continued furiously. Suddenly it stopped and the terrified women looked up, each wondering that she had escaped and expecting to find all her friends dead. None was wounded for the soldiers behind the gun had been firing blank cartridges. Several of the women went mad.

Archangel in the summer months is the brightest and one of the busiest spots in Russia. Every other shipping centre, with the exception of Vladivostok, seems to be moribund. Odessa, once the busiest port in the south, now counts it a day when it sees the smoke from one new ship's funnel. Leningrad, despite all its efforts, is still only an array of unused buoys. But when I was there, the riverway leading to Archangel was full of ships, British, German, Dutch, Norwegian, and many fishing boats from the north. The long lines of wharves were busy, work continuing under electric lights far into the night. Real work! To me the spectacle was an amazing novelty in Russia.

What was the explanation? Archangel is supported by two great industries—timber and fishing. Some time ago the timber industry was handed over to an unusually efficient organization, and practical men were given control. They set the riverside mills going again. They put real managers in charge and were, when I was there, moving ahead.

Going over the mills, it seemed that old-time Russia had come back. The work-people were really working. The workers' committees did not have much to say. The managers were treated with as much respect and obedience as they would have been in olden times and everyone seemed much happier because discipline had been restored.

Of course it was not all sunshine. The timber trust has been bled almost to death by taxation, one of its ships being seized for taxes. The elaborate requirements of the law compelled it to keep an army of officials and book-keepers of all kinds. Its overhead staff was at least tenfold the combined staffs of the private companies of the old days.

Last of all, the managers were like men on a battlefield,

who may be shot at any minute. Two Russian managers had been sent to prison for several years for breaches of the labour laws in dealing with their workers.

"Very likely I will finish up in gaol too," one manager told me. "But while I am in charge there is going to be no hanky-panky!"

Here spoke the real lumberman as I have found him, from Westralia to Newfoundland.

No one can see the picturesque water-front of Archangel, its wonderful churches with their blue and gold domes, its fine public buildings and its ancient memorials, without realizing that there is a city which counts for something in Russian history. It was there that the great British merchant adventurer, Sir Richard Chancellor, went in 1553, while he was seeking to find a passage across the northern seas to China. Archangel was not then in existence—being founded more than thirty years later—but Chancellor laid the strong foundations of British trade there and in Moscow.

When Peter the Great built St. Petersburg, he deliberately destroyed the sea trade of Archangel in order to promote the well-being of his own pet city. Nevertheless, Archangel lived on. In 1919 the Allied forces had their headquarters there in their campaign against the Bolshevists, and American, British and other soldiers held the city.

The full story of that disastrous and inglorious campaign has never been told. Its most tragic sequel followed after the Allied troops had left and when the Bolshevists came in. The Bolshevists took thousands of young Russian officers who had served in the regiments associated with the Allies and others, led them out beyond the city and shot them. Machine guns were used to sweep them down in groups.

Archangel is an exile city, one of the best of them. Where there is employment and an active public life, exile loses much of its terror. The group of men and women sent there are comparatively well off.

Among the exiles in Archangel I found men like Trapesnikov, the famous revolutionary, who spent many years in Arctic exile with some who are now leaders of the Communist party. His friends tell me that the portrait of him and of to-day's Commissars as young men in exile hangs in his room, but Trapesnikov's ideas do not now fit in with those of the Bolshevist leaders. He believes in freedom and a free press. Histories of the future, I suppose, will draw some lesson

from the spectacle of revolutionary leaders being exiled by other revolutionists. Trapesnikov is only a type, although the most conspicuous one, of many.

There was another exile, a girl, a student of the University of Moscow. In 1923 there was a committee of University students to co-operate with the American relief administration and the officials of the student movement in arranging for the distribution of relief to the students. This committee divided itself into two groups. On one side were several Russian Communists, who wished the relief to be given mainly wholly to proletarians. The other group wanted the relief distributed solely on the basis of need.

A few weeks after the American relief administration closed its doors and Col. Haskell returned to America, the girl and the young man who had led the moderate side were arrested. The young man was sent to Siberia, the girl to Archangel. I found her there, living on scanty and insufficient wages earned in an office.

There is a sequel to this, a sequel which the Moscow Government would do well to note. When, some time later, I was in Washington, I saw Mr. Hoover, then Secretary of Commerce, whom I had known in former years in China and in London. I found that Mr. Hoover knew all about the cases of imprisonment and exile of the American relief agents. He expressed his indignation in the most vigorous terms, denouncing the gross ingratitude of those who had responded to the American aid in this way. "You can take a message from me to the Russian authorities," he said. "So long as one person remains in prison in Russia because of their co-operation with our relief work, there is one member of the American administration at least who will not even discuss the question of renewing relations with Soviet Russia."

There was an old colonel of the Imperial guard, a fine white-haired gentleman who had taken no part in politics, but apparently had aroused the suspicion of the authorities by his religious zeal. So after many months of imprisonment in Moscow he had been sent to Archangel earlier in the year en route for Pechora, the great exile station farther north. A serious illness had prevented his being sent on. He was waiting in fear lest he be sent up by the last boat. He was absolutely destitute, but his fellow exiles were helping him.

I found many of the Archangel exiles in a state of great

alarm. They knew their good fortune in being in Archangel, and were trembling lest anything they might say or do cause the authorities to send them farther. There was one lady, a member of a great noble family to whom I was anxious to bring some relief, for I knew her to be in very real need. But she would not see me, even in the most secret way.

CHAPTER VII

PECHORA

DOWN at the wharf in Archangel lay a Soviet ship due to set out in a few hours for the far north-east, to the remote exile station of Pechora. I found passage in it to the Arctic.

Pechora is the most remote and desolate region in Europe, and one of the most isolated in the world. It lies in the Arctic circle, on the mainland south of Nova Zembla. Here northern Russia and Siberia meet. Under Czars and Communist Commissars alike, it has been a favourite place to consign political exiles to death in life.

From May until early September, Pechora can be reached by sea. That is the way I went there, a five days' journey from Archangel, past the bleak coasts of Murmansk, around the ever stormy Cape Kalin, past the precipitous coast of the reindeer island of Koljugev and then into the broad river mouth. Eleven to fourteen ships cross the bar of the river each summer. From there it is a seven days' trip by river steamer to the capital, Ust Tzilma.

August, the month that I chose, is the best time to journey there. In June and most of July, the place is eaten up with mosquitoes and gnats. The Arctic mosquito is the worst and most voracious of its kind. Even in Mid-August I found men still wearing their warm double-skinned reindeer hoods and cloaks and women and children wrapped in sheepskin.

Nothing grows in this northern area, except a little grass, weeds and a profusion of marshland flowers. In the town of Pustozerk, the most northerly of all, I could not even find a potato or a cabbage patch. In the height of summer the land never thaws more than eighteen inches below the surface. Farther south there is timber and rye cultivated.

Apart from the strip of sandy and forest land on either side of the river, this northern belt is tundra, frozen marshland. It forms a better barrier than prison walls could do.

Usually men who try to escape across it die, unless they have expert native aid.

Formerly, there was a post road, with rest houses and relays of horses, from Archangel to Ust Tzilma, and a river route from the south by which the merchants of Perm went to buy furs and fish. The Perm route is now impossible, while the post road has been allowed to fall into ruin. One reindeer mail went that way the winter before my arrival, and at least one party of exiles was marched across it, in the coldest weather.

A Norwegian lumber mill operated successfully there in pre-war days, but after the revolution, the Bolshevists seized it. It was burned, and its ruins still stood, but there was a large stock of prepared timber, left over by the Norwegian managers, and this was being exported by the Russians. Apart from this, the great industry is fishing, and the Pechora salmon are among the finest in the world. There have been many reports of petroleum in the south, equal to Pennsylvania oil. Only limited quantities have been tapped, and there will be little development until the railway goes north from Perm. The oil development has ceased.

The inhabitants, apart from officials and exiles, are few and widely scattered. There are three main groups, the Samoyeds, the Zirians, and the Russian settlers, mostly "old believers" whose forefathers were sent there hundreds of years ago.

The Samoyeds are very primitive, stocky, sturdy and dirty. They live off the reindeer and the sea. Reindeer skin gives them their homes—"tschum"—not unlike the tents of the American Indians. Reindeer furs clothe them. They drink the blood of the reindeer when they kill it and dry its flesh for food. They have no room for weaklings. One custom is to throw a newly born baby out into the snow to harden it. If it dies, that is proof that it was delicate and is better dead.

The Samoyeds came from the cradle of the human race, central Asia, and have customs and certain religious powers unexplainable by western standards. Nominally they are Christian, but still cling to many of the customs of their old faith, Shammanism, based on spiritualism and hypnotism and to some extent sex inversion. Their priests can perform some seemingly impossible things in a way which, frankly, I cannot understand.

After the Samoyeds come the Zirians, the ablest hunters

in the world. Blond and grey of eye, with big, strangely-shaped heads, they represent a much higher type of civilization than the Samoyeds. One Zirian told me on shipboard many tales of his life. "Blood! Blood! Blood!" was the note of his talks. "Give me blood, the hot blood of half-killed beasts! Give me their raw, hot bodies! You can keep your cities, your New York or London. Give me the tundra!"

The old Russian settlers have none too easy a time. Most of their men died or disappeared in the Great War. "When you go back, find my daddy for me," one little fellow of six begged me one day, when he climbed on my lap. In most cases the wives do not know whether their husbands are dead or alive. On the woman the burden of life has fallen. To be a woman in the north is to be condemned to hard labour. A man's main demand in picking a wife is that she shall be a good worker. The man controls whatever property there is; the woman toils. She starts her tasks while a little girl and no labour is too hard for her. She is attired in half-masculine costume, with high waterproof boots. She catches the fish and cures them. When she has a moment to spare from her fishing, she gathers wood for fuel for the winter. She rows the boat that fetches salmon for sale at the visiting ship's side; her husband negotiates the sale and takes the money.

Nobody except the officials has much interest in politics. The only genuine Communists that I could find there were the officials, mostly Jews, sent from Moscow.

There were a few rich men among the inhabitants in the old days. By rich, I mean the owners of many reindeer. Their reindeer were seized and they have been made poor and penalized in various ways. One man, for instance, has been forbidden to catch salmon, for no other reason than his high birth.

In recent years, life in Pechora has become much harder, mainly owing to the high price of manufactured goods.

"We have not been able to buy cloth for some time now," one woman told me. "So we have been using sacking for our clothing. But even the supply of sacking is running out. Our waterproof boots are in holes, a serious thing for those of us who must wade in the river. But boots are too dear for us to think of buying new ones."

Money was never greatly used here, for there is little to buy, except fish. One afternoon, two boatwomen took me

over a difficult lake route and at the end I paid them liberally. They looked at my money in evident disappointment. "Could you not give us something useful?" they asked. By "useful", they meant sugar, tea, candles or cloth.

Visitors to Pechora are so few that they cannot hope to escape attention. Naturally, there was much speculation about the reasons for my arrival. The favourite explanation was that I was a British ambassador, come to arrange for the cession of North-East Russia to England in return for the Anglo-Russian agreement.

When the Czarist government was overthrown in 1917, the exiles were made free and returned to their homes. In 1923, the Bolsheviks started sending exiles to Pechora again. By the autumn there were about 130 persons living in Ust Tzilma who had been exiled for political or social reasons. There was a smaller group in the adjoining capital of the Zirian state.

Most of these exiles were "nepmen". Three were priests, sent for refusing to forsake the Patriarch Tikhon. They were despondent, not because of their own fate, but at the thought of what was happening to their wives and families left behind. Several old "White" officers were having a great struggle, but perhaps the worst off were the purely political exiles. Several of these young persons, scarcely out of their teens, guilty of no real offence, were suffering badly.

There was a girl, sent north for some trivial affair. She had been a University student and lay dying in her lodging with tuberculosis. There was no medical aid for her, but her fellow exiles did the best they could.

The isolation, the absolute lack of intellectual life, the long winter darkness and their poverty, made the days of the exiles very dreary. They were cut off from books and papers —except Bolshevist literature. There was nothing to buy, even if they had money.

The policy of the political police seems to be to allow no exile to settle down in a district. If he builds up a good connection, he may expect to be ordered elsewhere. This, however, is not universal. The head of the political police in Archangel, for example, seemed to treat the exiles under him as well as he could.

On my return journey I came across an example of how exiles are shifted about. A week or two previously a student exile in Ust Tzilma was suddenly arrested and sent elsewhere. His fellow exiles went to the wharf to see him off, cheered

him and sang revolutionary songs in his honour, until they were sharply warned to stop.

A few days after this, two other students were taken. A policeman seized them and hurried them away, not even allowing them to gather a change of linen or warm clothing for travel. They were conducted to the Archangel steamer, where a fresh guard awaited them. They could not at first learn where they were going, but it gradually transpired that one was bound for Solovetsky, the terrible concentration camp, and the other for elsewhere.

One of these two had been a student in the University of Moscow and the other an engineer in Odessa. A few leaflets found on the Odessa man, issued by the Menshevists, were enough to send him north. The student was accused of being a Social Democrat.

Poorly clad, under nourished and brave souled, they aroused my admiration and pity. I was anxious to do something for them and said so.

"You can do nothing for us," one of them replied. "Our lives are finished. They will send us to concentration camps, and on one excuse or another, keep us there for many years. But if you want to help us, do this. Tell the truth to the world about the treatment of the exiles. Help the men who will come after us. Let the facts be known!"

CHAPTER VIII

HELL I

WHEN I entered a shipping office in Archangel and asked how it would be possible to reach Solovetsky, the clerk who answered me seemed overwhelmed. His lower jaw dropped and he rose shakily to his feet, looking at me with bulging eyes. "Solovetsky!" he stammered. "No one can go to Solovetsky now.—The G.P.U. have it."

Solovetsky Island, in the White Sea, is the only part of Soviet Russia which I was refused permission to visit. The political police took great care that I should not have any chance of personal inspection there. But I was able, both in Archangel and elsewhere, to obtain details of its life from people who had been in the place, and to see letters smuggled out from deportees. From these sources, I learnt more than one could have discovered on a brief visit, particularly had that visit been officially controlled.

No words of mine can convey any full sense of the horrors on the island. In a word, it is Hell. The Communists profess their disbelief in hell as a future state, but they have taken good care to create here a hell on earth.

That sounds the language of exaggeration. Let me tell the story and you will judge.

Solovetsky Island, seventeen miles long and eleven miles wide, was for centuries the site of one of the most famous and wealthy monasteries in Russia. Founded in 1429 by two monks, it rose to high importance in the reign of Ivan the Terrible, and its men were noted for their stubborn and bold qualities. Its greatest abbot, Philip, became Metropolitan of Moscow, defied Ivan the Terrible to his face for his sins and suffered accordingly. The order owned vast estates, not only the whole of the island itself, but much land beyond. Its wealth and its reputation for sanctity brought to it every year armies of pilgrims who crossed the 200 miles of sea from Archangel as an act of faith.

When the Revolution came the Bolshevists promptly dis-

possessed the monks and drove them forth. In 1922 Solovetsky was turned into a concentration camp for exiles and criminals, and it has since been increasingly used for that purpose.

When I first heard of it, there were about 5,500 exiles and prisoners there. Then the authorities greatly increased the deportations, especially of criminals, and by about a year later the figures had gone up to 8,500. A year ago, the most reliable statistics available gave no less than 27,000 men and women prisoners, in addition to a large settlement at Kem, the nearest point on the mainland, 40 miles away.

The Russian official press would have us believe that the life of the exiles in this concentration camp is so delightful that their one regret is that their unfortunate friends who are at liberty are not allowed to share their joys! I wonder if the official propagandists think that they deceive anybody by this?

Solovetsky Island lies just below the Arctic Circle. For between seven and eight months of the year—or in mild years five months—it is almost completely cut off from the mainland. The seas around freeze, the ice is broken and treacherous and almost the only people who can cross it are the native hunters and fishermen who occasionally, and at tremendous risk, make their way over. Anyone who has lived where the seas are masses of floating ice will bear me out when I say that there could be no journey more perilous than to cross them. I personally would rather go through a typhoon, awesome and terrible as that is.

For two months a year, the island is almost entirely dark, there being merely a faint light at mid-day. For three months more there is very little light indeed.

Who are the exiles who are sent there? There was for some time a considerable group of political prisoners, Social Democrats, Social Revolutionaries and others belonging to regular democratic parties. These receive separate treatment, none too good in all truth, but very different from what was awarded to the others. All the rest were regarded as criminals.

Picture the conditions of these exiles. After arrest they are kept imprisoned for varying periods, from a fortnight to a year, and during this time they are under constant cross-examination. Then they are sent part of the way in a prisoners' train. The more fortunate are allowed to travel in ordinary fourth class cars, but most are sent in the regular

criminal car, which is divided into a number of iron-barred cells with a corridor along the front, where armed guards stand. The prisoners are packed in these cells as tightly as can be, and the sight of them with their bearded faces and unkempt looks, begging passers-by for a cigarette as the train stands at a country station, is not soon to be forgotten.

At first the prisoners who had been declared "politicals" were housed by themselves. They were not forced to work, and were allowed many privileges over the others. They had freedom of movement within a restricted circle. Their food was not particularly bad except towards the end of the long winter when, as in 1924, there was much scurvy among them for lack of green vegetables.

The wives of "politicals" were in many cases given leave to visit them once a year for, I believe, a week. The wives were housed in a building near the shore, connected with the administration offices. They were searched to the skin on coming to the island and on leaving it, even their hair being taken down and examined. They were allowed to talk to only their own husbands, the penalty for exchanging a word with any other prisoner being the loss of one day's interview with their husbands. An hour was the time each day. The wives had to come from wherever they lived at their own cost, and the permission to make the visit was not always easily obtained.

The political exiles talked, argued, debated, quarrelled and complained all day long. There was nothing else for them to do. Early in the morning they were awakened to the call of "kipyatok" (boiling water) and each hurried to have his teapot filled in typically Russian fashion. Then they loafed around. In summer life was not unpleasant except that it was absolutely aimless. The story is well known of how, in the winter of 1923-4, a group of exiles, bored to death with the long winter nights, quarrelled with the authorities and how, on very little excuse, several of them were shot by the guards. There was great trouble about this in Moscow, and soon afterwards the commandant was removed. As a result of the great indignation expressed abroad at the treatment of the politicals here, it was announced in 1925 that they would be shifted. This was done, but shortly afterwards another smaller group of political exiles, Georgian Social Democrats and others,

were brought here and given the same treatment as "criminals".

The lot of the "criminals", including the Churchmen, is very different indeed. Let us remember who the ordinary exiles are. In this mixed host are to be found archbishops and bishops, many priests, many members of religious organizations both Christian and Jewish, as, for example, the Zionist Scouts, princes, former statesmen, professors and criminals of the worst degree, living together, working together in their misery.

During the first few months after their arrival in the island, they pass through a period of moral isolation, when they are worked with cruel severity under conditions of almost killing discipline. They are given difficult tasks in the marshes and in the woods, each man being allotted work estimated to take 8 hours a day, but often impossible to complete in 10. They have to work under conditions of fierce heat in midsummer and cold and darkness in winter. Death is the favourite punishment for the slightest infraction of discipline and death is almost to be preferred to imprisonment in the pitch dark cells, or to life in the disciplinary battalions. There are terrible and inhuman forms of punishment, some of which are described later. The prisoner whose clothing wears out and who is not able to buy more can dress himself in sacking if he will. The food is so inadequate that those who have no money to buy from the camp canteen almost starve. Isolated, stricken, beaten, vermin-eaten and half-frozen, kept in this land of long darkness and solitude until death brings them release, mixing with the lowest criminals, having to sleep with them, eight in a cell, having to listen to their foulness, are some of the best men in Russia to-day. Here are Christian teachers undergoing the most real martyrdom.

What can the prisoners do to help themselves? Nothing! There is a strong garrison of troops, the warders are armed, and they are absolutely at the mercy of dehumanized and brutalized gaolers.

The number of archbishops, bishops and priests amongst the exiles is considerable. A report based on information secretly smuggled out, issued by the Social Democratic party in 1929, gave the number of bishops then there as 19, in addition to one at Kem on the mainland. This was the figure that I had obtained some little time before. The archbishops and bishops then were :—

Ambroise	Bishop of Podolsk
Amphiloche	Bishop of Krasnoiarsk
Antoine	Bishop of Marrovpol
Basile	Bishop of Prilovki
Eugene	Archbishop of Blagoviestchensk
Gabriel	Bishop of Oslachkov
Gleb	Bishop of Michailov
Hilarion	former Archbishop of Kroutetzk
Innocent	Bishop of Lagoda
Joachim	Archbishop of Alatyrsk
Josaphat	Bishop of Dimitrov
Juvinal	Archbishop of Koursk
Manuel	Archbishop of Lovga
Nectary	Bishop of Narensk
Nicon	Bishop of Bielgorod
Paul	Bishop of Melekesse
Prokope	Archbishop of Khersone
Raphael	Archbishop of Alexandrovsk
Sophrony	Bishop of Selenga

Most of these prelates had been sent here by administrative order, that is to say, had been given no trial. Some of them were very old men in the seventies and early eighties. One was working as a cook. Some were gardeners, some watchmen. They had gone through the period of "moral quarantine" imposed on the others and were treated certainly no better, rather much worse, because of their religion, age and rank.

Chief among the ministers of religion who were prisoners in the island when I was investigating it, was Archbishop Hilarion, a sturdy, vigorous young Christian leader. I never met Hilarion, but I had heard so much about him that the man seemed alive to me. In Moscow I was told how he had stood firmly by the side of the Patriarch in the darkest hours, determined to yield nothing of his faith for political expediency.

In Archangel, where Hilarion spent the first period of his exile, every man who met him sang his praises. One old man told me how Hilarion had practically saved his life by giving him his valenky (high felt boots) which are almost indispensable in winter there. An exile of brilliant intellect poured out the tale of how Hilarion came along to him and saved him from stagnation by keen discussions. In Archangel

Hilarion had a considerable amount of liberty, like other exiles. Then they sent him off first to the freezing barracks of Kem and next to Solovetsky, where, when I last heard, he was working in a navvy gang on the railroads. Even there the man's personality stood out, and he was made foreman of the navvies. I do not know what has happened to him since.

What crime had Hilarion committed? His crime was that he was not an acceptable person to the Soviet officials.

The first batches of political prisoners who were sent to Solovetsky smuggled out details of the treatment of the other prisoners there. Here is their report :—

"On 1st July, 1923, the first batch of 150 political prisoners from Pertoninsk landed on the sacred shores of the Solovetsky island. But already the islands were not untenanted. In the various spacious buildings of the well-known monastery, some 5,000 prisoners were already housed on a group of islands, consisting for the most part of criminals, suspected spies, 'White' officers and soldiers who had not been amnestied, clerics of various religions (including 19 bishops), speculators and profiteers of every kind; communists convicted of fraud, and so on.

"The accounts received on their arrival by the newcomers from the old inmates were not very cheering; and they were soon able to convince themselves that the reports of the criminals were not exaggerated. The whole island constituted a prison in which the vilest methods of Czarist times had been re-introduced. Indeed the régime was much crueller and more inhuman than of old in the ill-famed island of Sakhalin.

"The working hours of the captives were unlimited; they got starvation rations; the main diet was stinking dried stockfish; throughout and on every possible occasion there was maltreatment. Every local overseer, every supervisor had the right to give stripes with a stick; the higher officials required no right to do so, they struck whenever they felt inclined and with whatever they pleased. For trifling offences a punishment was employed which ought to be unknown even to the representatives of the most exotic regions within the Communist International. The victims, sometimes by dozens, were stripped and for 4—6 hours exposed as a prey to *mosquitoes*, towards evening, when in those parts every place teems with them. By the side of them a guard was

posted who had to see that the victims did not drive the mosquitoes away. There were employed also other no less 'civilized' penalties, derived from the days of Ivan the Terrible; e.g., the so-called 'stone sacks'. A prisoner condemned to this punishment was thrust for one or even two weeks into a sack-like cavity in a stone wall, in which it was impossible either to sit or to lie properly.

"Still more wretched was the lot of the female prisoners in Solovetsky. The potentates of the camp established for themselves, especially from among the wives of 'White' officers, regular harems. The remainder were to such an extent starved, denuded and demoralized, that they would abandon themselves 'voluntarily' for a ration of bread.

"It goes without saying that concurrently with these mediæval cruelties, hyper-modern methods of cultural work and 'social education' were put into practice at the instigation of hypocritical circulars, overflowing with 'humanitarianism' from the central authority. They had there a school, lectures, a theatre, a club and so on; but all these institutions in which the privileged portion of the prisoners, who had understood how to get on good terms with the management, could participate—all these were in reality only a mask to conceal the abominations of the thoroughly corrupt administrators of the camp, the bulk of whom consisted of amnestied criminals and Communists convicted of fraud."

Eighteen undergraduates in the University of Moscow learned that they were to be "cleansed". In other words, they were to be turned out of the University because they belonged to families that had once been of the "better" class. They were poor enough then, in all conscience, but their fathers and their grandfathers had not been manual labourers, so they had to go.

To be expelled from a University means ruin for a Russian's professional future. He cannot enter any other University or be a lawyer or a doctor and is definitely declassed. The eighteen to be expelled from Moscow, being youths of spirit, got together and decided that they would not submit. If Russia would not give them an opportunity they would find opportunity elsewhere. They would cross the frontier and seek in some foreign University the hospitality denied them at home.

They laid their plans carefully—but one of them talked. Walls have ears in Moscow and the eighteen rebels were

promptly arrested. After a term of inquiry and imprisonment they were sent to Solovetsky.

To a Russian youth there is nothing overwhelmingly terrible about arrest and exile. It is almost a customary fate and certainly there is no disgrace in it. These eighteen boys recalled the exiles of the past. They remembered how Kropotkin had escaped from the fortress prison of SS. Peter and Paul. They remembered many other great exiles. Political exile is, after all, an inconvenience rather than a wreck.

The eighteen young men reached Solovetsky, when they found to their surprise that they were not to be treated as political exiles. They belonged to no formal organization; they were not Social Democrats or Social Revolutionists, but simply troublesome young men. So they were consigned to the criminal quarters, had to live with criminals, eat with criminals and work as criminals.

Their daily food was a pound of black bread and a dish of doubtful fish soup. Their work started early and continued late and was done under exceedingly unhealthy conditions. The young fellows said "We will strike!" and so, having in mind the tradition of how political prisoners ought to act, they declared a hunger strike.

Now the Soviet leaders knew all about hunger strikes. Most of them were exiles themselves in the old days and were familiar with the tricks and ways of the "political". Hunger strikes are not allowed in Soviet prisons. The guards fell on the young men, overpowered them, strapped them to stretchers, carried them aboard ship and dumped the lot of them on an island eighty miles away, more solitary, more miserable, more severe than Solovetsky itself. Two ships a year go to that island. A friend of mind spent some time with a heart-broken mother of one of the young men, when she was waiting for a ship to take her to visit her son.

Here is a report of conditions, which reached me from a man who had been in the island. It is impossible for me to indicate more definitely who he is.

"Former better class people and *intelligentzia* are the prevailing element among the exiles and there are a number of ecclesiastics. With the exception of the so-called 'pure' politicals who are kept apart on an adjoining island, all prisoners kept within the walls of the Solovetsky monastery are divided into six groups in accordance with the category of

'guilt'. The régime there is so severe, that, in the words of one who had the misfortune of staying there several months, 'Any one of the exiled there would be gladly willing to spend a whole year in an inner prison for every month in the Solovetsky'. Work is compulsory for everyone, and consists of wood cutting in swampy marshes, which are situated ten or more versts from the concentration camp. The working day is not fixed. Every prisoner has to cut a cubic sajen per day which, on an average, takes ten to twelve hours to complete. Other work like masonry, earth-clearing for a proposed narrow gauge railway, building and repairing houses, etc., is not less heavy. Food is scarce and bad. The majority of prisoners are suffering from scurvy and other diseases, which is the direct result of conditions there and the scarcity of medicaments and proper medical treatment. But worst of all is the way the exiles are being treated by the prison authorities. Heavy punishments are imposed for the slightest disobedience and death sentence is the only penalty for offending the prison authorities, including the warders, by word or action. Such death sentences are very frequent, as the conditions are almost intolerable. Suicides are numberless, as it is considered the only means of escaping the slow torture. The monastery is surrounded by a high brick wall which was built in the XVIth century, and for eight months during the year the Solovetsky island is cut off from the rest of the world and deprived of daylight."

CHAPTER IX

BACK FROM EXILE

I was in Stockholm when word came to me one January day that a Finnish officer, formerly a Commander in the Russian Imperial Navy who had been imprisoned in Solovetsky, was being released and would shortly reach Helsingfors. Here was a unique opportunity of learning at first hand the real facts about conditions in the island. Making my way through the winter ice of the Baltic to the Finnish capital, I found that the released prisoner, Mr. Boris Cederholm, had already arrived and was resting and recovering in the home of his family. Mr. Cederholm, who still wore the long beard of his prison camp, showed obvious signs of the severity of his experience. Here is the account he gave me, slowly, at times almost painfully, in the course of conversations stretching over several days. The sincerity of his narrative was obvious to me who heard him. His tone was almost passionless, the voice of a man out of whom all feeling had for the time been stamped.

Mr. Cederholm has since given the record of his experiences in more detailed form in a book which can be cordially recommended to all who desire to know the actualities of Russian life to-day—("In the Clutches of the Che-ka").

I visited Russia for the purpose of concluding an agreement with the Soviet Government, on behalf of a well-known Buenos Aires firm, for a supply of bark for tanning leather. The terms had been arranged with their representatives abroad and I expected all to be finished quickly. But when the final agreement was presented to me for signature I found that several vital clauses had been changed.

My power of attorney did not authorize me to accept the changes, so I wrote to my firm for further instructions, living meanwhile in one of the two Finnish houses in Leningrad, with Finnish officials.

I was summoned to the headquarters of the political police in the Gorokhovaya. There an official, after some general

talk, showed me two photographs and asked me if I recognized them. One was of a man I knew well; the other I did not know. When I told the official this, he demanded that I give him the name of the second person. I once more assured him that I could not.

Thereupon he bade an assistant sitting by him to read a clause from the criminal code providing that any person who wilfully refused to give evidence became liable to a year's imprisonment. "Grashdanin (citizen)," he said, in a solemn voice, 'if you will not tell me the name of the person, my duty compels me to order your arrest."

I did not understand, until two or three weeks after, that the whole thing was a carefully-staged farce. The police were suspicious of the Finns in Leningrad and wanted to learn more about them. I was a Finn not protected by diplomatic privileges, as the consular officials were, and they had resolved to arrest me.

From that office I was taken under escort to Shpalernaya prison. As a concession I was given a guard armed with only a revolver, and was driven in a droshky, instead of being marched through the streets. At Shpalernaya, I was placed in solitary confinement in cell number twenty-two, part of the special section. The window was boarded up with wood, which made the room very dark and so served to conceal some of the dirt. The walls were dripping with water and the cell was so cold that in the morning I found little lumps of ice on my very short moustache.

I was kept there for a few months in absolute isolation, allowed no books, newspapers or writing materials, and was constantly brought up for cross-examination. Questions were rained on me about the activities of different Finns. I refused to answer them.

It was with difficulty that I learned the charges against me. After some weeks I was told. I was accused, under articles 66-68 of the criminal code, with counter-revolution, association with the international bourgeoisie, war espionage and economic espionage. The penalty for those crimes is death.

At the end of four months I was transferred to cell 217, where conditions were better. It was a cell for two and so I had company. I was allowed to exercise two minutes each day.

Early in October I was told my fate. The committee of

the Central Board (praesidium) of the G.P.U. in Moscow had sentenced me to three years' detention in the prison camp in Solovetsky island. This is a sentence that some would think worse than death. I at once declared a hunger strike.

At the end of the ninth day, I collapsed and became unconscious. I can dimly remember being half-aroused by the jolting of the prison ambulance in which I was being taken to the prison hospital of Dr. Gahz and of noticing the bobbing electric lights on the Nevski prospekt.

Next I found myself in bed in the hospital. The doctors told me that if I continued my hunger strike, they would have to inject nourishment into me.

I promised them to eat, for my main purpose had been gained. I had succeeded in delaying my departure until the waters of the White Sea were impassable on account of winter frosts. My government would intervene to effect my release if I was where I could be released. But once in Solovetsky, it would be impossible to come back until the following summer.

I had established means even in prison of telling my friends how I was and even of reporting, day by day, my condition during my hunger strike. How I managed this it would not be wise to say.

The hospital doctors dared not show any favours, for they were watched at every step by secret police, ready to denounce them as being friendly to prisoners of their own class, the bourgeoisie. But they treated us humanely. The condition of the hospital itself was terrible, the tuberculous, epileptics, and persons with deadly infectious diseases being all mixed together with the healthy.

Two months later I was sent back to Shpalernaya prison, to cell 13, unhappy number; meant for twenty-two prisoners, but with at times as many as forty-seven. We slept on the floor, on benches, wherever we could.

But if our cell was crowded, our company was choice. Chief among us was Prince Golitzin, last Prime Minister of the last Czar, and in his day one of the mightiest men in Russia. Eighty-one years old and half-paralysed, he had been arrested in the Litseist process, when a number of old monarchists were accused of conspiring to procure the return of the Imperial family.

The old man was a sad picture. He suffered from a painful malady, and each night, with shoulders bent low,

he would slowly pace the cell for hours in agony, until at last he would drop down and try to rest. Eventually he was taken out and shot.

We had many Jewish prisoners, most of them charged with circulating counterfeit money. In Russia no offence is punished more mercilessly than this. It is almost enough to be the husband of the cousin of the man who handled the false money to be put to death.

There were thirty-two Jews held under this charge. I felt sorry for them. Most of them, I am convinced, knew nothing or had played only a very minor part in the business. One of them, a fine lad, talked to me by the hour about his mother. The thirty-two were all shot.

Our food in Shpalernaya prison was little enough. In the morning a pound and a half of black bread (this to last us the day) and warm water; for midday, an indescribable soup, one day of herring and the next of cabbage; in the evening, kasha, a kind of Russian porridge, and more hot water.

Each Thursday evening, at 10 o'clock, came the critical moment of the week. The decisions of the Central Board of the G.P.U. which had arrived from Moscow were then made known.

There would come a banging of the doors of cells, as the officials drew near. Can you imagine our feelings as they approached? Some of us—we knew not which—were to be summoned to freedom, some to exile, and some to quick death.

Our door would be flung open. Our first glance was at the girl clerks, standing behind with the papers. If their faces looked agitated and if, maybe, there were tears in their eyes, we knew that many had been sentenced to die.

The names of the men wanted were called out. "To the office" was the one direction. What for, they were not told until they went below.

By lying flat on the floor and looking down the shaft where our food came up, we could see, through the hole in the shaft, the scene in the yard outside. Here the prisoners sentenced to die were taken.

A prison motor-van—we nicknamed it the "Red Merchant"—was waiting. Each prisoner was first gagged, a big cork being fastened in his mouth. This was to prevent him from

crying out. The Jewish prisoners would cry: "Hi, hi-yi-hi." Then their arms would be tied behind them and they would be ordered into the van. If there were only a few of them to be shot, say, fifteen or so, they would be taken to Gorokhovaya, where there is an underground cellar for the purpose. If there were more, they were taken to the artillery ground, the Polygon, outside the city.

The process of killing is always the same. The executioner grasps the man's head from behind and shoots him with a Nagan revolver or Mauser pistol, just behind the ear.

These executioners are well-paid specialists. Later on, in prison, I came in contact with one of them. He was a confirmed cocaine addict.

I remained in this prison until August. Then I was sent, one of a party of ninety-six, to Solovetsky. We were crowded into a prisoners' car, the kind known in Russia as a Stolypin. The compartments, triple-shelved, are barred with steel and open into a narrow passage-way where the guards march. The prisoners lie with their heads to the passage, so that they may easily be counted.

It took three days to reach Kem, the port of embarkation for Solovetsky. Those three days still remain to me a nightmare. We were packed in the car almost to suffocation. The vermin dropped from the ceiling on us. We were given no food, and had only what we had taken with us. Ninety-five reached Kem. One died on the way.

We had to wait a fortnight in Kem for passage to the island. Things were made much worse for us there because in March five officers had succeeded in escaping from Kem while on their way to Solovetsky. Since then conditions had been very severe. We were kept hard at work, carrying loads to and from the ship. It seemed almost a relief when at last we embarked. We little knew what was before us.

Life at Solovetsky was hell. There man ceases to be man and is dragged down to the level of the brutes. There is suffering so organized, so continuous and overwhelming that I can scarcely hope to make others realize it.

Yet I was not at Solovetsky in the worst season of the year. I was there in the summer and autumn when things are at their best. In the winter, when the island is cut off from the rest of the world for many months by the floating ce of the White Sea, when there is darkness for all but a

brief midday spell, when food runs short and scurvy spreads, then life is black indeed.

On the 26th of August our party was up at four o'clock and we were placed on the prisoners' boats, reaching Solovetsky at three in the afternoon. Then we were paraded and registered. That took until six o'clock. We had had nothing to eat all day, but without being given a meal we were sent off at once to a spot seven kilometres from the Kremlin, the central castle on the island, and ordered to drag back sixteen small wagons loaded with turf. These wagons were on the soft, sinking soil. It was impossible to drag them. We put planks down to wheel them over. But the only way was to lift them, though they were fearfully heavy, and carry them along. Never had I dreamed of such a task. One man broke a blood vessel and died.

By three in the morning we had somehow got them over one and one-half kilometres. Then the overseer ordered us to finish the job and take them all the way. Fortunately after a time we came to rails, but it was seven in the morning before we had done.

Food? We had had no food since the day before last, but we were too tired to think of food. We just dropped down and slept till evening. Then there was a meal for us, a soup of preserved cod, stinking and putrid.

We were housed at first in the old cathedral. There were 600 men lying on benches, so packed that we all had to lie on our sides. Our washing-place was half a mile away, and of it and the sanitary arrangements the less said the better.

These were the more interesting because all around the walls of the cathedral were great signs calling us to cleanliness and to labour. The sacred figures had been white-washed over, but they still showed under the white-wash. Over them were pious Communist mottoes.

Under the half-obliterated figure of Christ above the altar hung a portrait of Lenin. Then came a rhyme:

> "The world will go as we demand
> Labour shall the earth command."

Then came another admirable sentiment.

> "There can be no progress without labour and knowledge."

"There can be no progress without labour and knowledge!" And we poor, half-starved, aching, dead-beat folk, getting up from the few inches on the benches on which we had to squeeze ourselves, glanced again at the walls to see the words :

"Labour makes man strong."

It did not make one man strong. Three days after our arrival we found that on the first night one man had quietly slipped under one of the benches and died there. His body had lain for three days undiscovered. We were too wearied to notice anything.

They sent us out into the marshes to gather timber. We had to work up to our breasts in water. We worked twelve hours a day. Those who make trouble are given sixteen hours. If that does not quiet them they are given a bullet behind the left ear. Solovetsky has its own official praesidium, which hands out discipline to the prisoners. Underneath the monks' cell was a great underground apartment, where troublesome prisoners were sent. Besides these were still lower, separate cubby-holes in which men could be shut up.

Then followed a time of unspeakable horror. Our crowded sleeping quarters in the cathedral, our filthy food and our hard labour, starting at six o'clock in the morning, made me understand how it is that few people indeed live on Solovetsky island for more than two years.

I found many of my old friends who had been in prison with me at Petrograd and who had joined special companies, or had obtained posts outside the usual labour gangs. As you will understand, in a big community like the concentration camp at Solovetsky, there have to be specialists of all kinds, from engineers to gardeners. My friends helped me in many ways. Prisoners are allowed to buy food at the camp canteen. Those who cannot do so almost starve. My money had not yet come, so my friends advanced me some. Then they advised me how to secure a post in the canteen far earlier than usual, and so escape the long period of heavy labour, "moral quarantine", imposed on most after arrival.

Two of the Churchmen there specially impressed me. One was the old Archbishop Peter, cultured, good-humoured and good-natured, sent to Solovetsky because he was suspected of harbouring counter-revolutionary designs. Another was Professor Verbitsky of the Theological Academy.

Bad as our lot was, it was mild to the fate of many others. The men who had no friends to send them money to buy extra food starved. They were ragged as scarecrows, for the authorities took no trouble about clothing them, and were horribly gaunt. Every one of us was liable, at the whim of the authorities, to 30 days' imprisonment in a dark dungeon, where one remained, except when they let one out during the day to do specially severe labour. Those who received this punishment more than twice in three months were sent to a disciplinary battalion living under unbelievable conditions. These, ragged, shoeless and stricken, looked objects of horror. The authorities seemed to make a delight in devising ways of annoying us and making our lives miserable. You must remember that the guards, the soldiers and the gaolers had mostly been sent here because of offences that they had committed. The collegium of the administration on the island had power to sentence to death and did not hesitate to use it.

I dreaded the thought of spending winter on Solovetsky. I knew that my friends were working hard to secure my release, but if they did not do so quickly, all communication would be cut off until the spring.

We had a remarkable divisional commander, a Kuban Cossack, who drank freely. On the last night when I stayed at the cathedral, we were suddenly aroused at about 3 in the morning and expected anything, possibly to be shot down, on some excuse, with machine guns, as had happened to parties of prisoners before. But it was only the commander, very drunk, who was trying to sober himself by horseback riding and had ridden up the 47 steps leading to the stone gallery of the cathedral to inspect the companies under his charge. He greeted us with a violent jeer, as we stood in line awaiting his pleasure. There was a little old priest next to me and I noticed that he suddenly seemed to be taken ill. I asked him what was the matter and he pointed down to where we were standing. We were on the ruins of the altar, the most sacred spot in all the cathedral, where only the priest should be.

Many priests who were among us behaved with dignity, doing all they were ordered to do without a murmur, submitting to the hardest and most repulsive tasks during their period of "moral quarantine" and keeping up, even in their most degrading labour, the discipline of their rank. Some

of them, after having gone through their period of "moral quarantine", were given posts in offices. There is a church outside the Kremlin where, on Saturday nights, they are allowed to conduct services, although Mass is never celebrated.

The weather was growing colder and colder. Winter was coming and hope almost died. Then one day I was summoned to the Kremlin and told to collect my things immediately and run for a steamer leaving for Kem on the mainland. My respite had come.

CHAPTER X

THE COLDEST SPOT IN THE WORLD

THE coldest spot in the world is not the north or the south pole. It is the stretch of land from Obdorsk to Verkhoyansk, on the border of the Arctic, in Siberia.

When I returned to civilization on one occasion, after a winter in Central Siberia, some of my friends flatly refused to believe that at times I had been in a temperature of 66 below zero, or 98 degrees of frost.

"Your thermometer was probably wrong," one man suggested. "Scott, in his Antarctic journey, never met with such cold."

But in north Central Siberia the temperature sometimes falls to 90 below zero, or 122 degrees of frost.

What does this mean? I can best illustrate it with one fact. If you are not careful, your eyes will freeze.

The long winter cold and darkness of northern Siberia gives life there an aspect all its own. Even in a southern city like Irkutsk, people who are much about in the streets keep their noses covered. In such climate, an ordinary fur coat is about as valuable as summer garments would be in January. The only satisfactory foot covering is very thick, clumsy, high felt boots (valenky), with thick socks inside. Most people wear thick heavy sheepskin coats with high sheepskin collars. These can be bought in the open-air markets of Tomsk or Krasnoiarsk for from £2 to £4.

But the real garment is the double-skinned reindeer cloak, with hood added. This cloak is without buttons and the wearer covers his head with the hood so that only a small part of the face is exposed. Even that is further protected by a fringe of wolverine. This wolverine, with its long hair, possesses one wonderful quality; moisture does not gather and freeze on it. An ordinary fur would be a mass of ice in a few minutes from one's breath.

Without great care the frost will get you. I knew a Russian mining engineer who was overcome by cold and collapsed.

Some peasants found him and took him to their hut. His hands and feet had been badly frozen. The peasants were probably drunk, for instead of rubbing the man's limbs with snow, they threw him atop of a stove to thaw. The engineer lost both arms and both legs.

This northern country, equal in area to France, Germany and Italy combined, has a population of about 20,000, mainly natives. Villages are thirty, forty or fifty miles apart, and a village often consists of only two or three houses. A few score of dwellings make a town, to rank large on maps.

There are very few roads. In summer one travels by the river routes and in winter over the snow or across the frozen rivers. In the autumn and spring travel is impossible, and you may be cut off from everyone by the weather for weeks at a time. Once, for example, I waited three weeks in one place to reach another 200 miles away. The roads were impassable, for the regular winter frosts were being delayed.

The river track was impossible, for any night the river might freeze and ice lock the boat in some desolate spot where a traveller would stay till he died. I found two boatmen willing to make the attempt to go north for big money, but the local authorities politely intervened. "It would be very inconvenient for a foreigner to die in this district, and would cause trouble abroad," said the President of the Gub-is-pol-kom (governing committee). "Please do not go."

Wolves! Yes, plenty of them. As everyone knows, the wolf is a coward and generally will not attack alone. But packs of wolves, driven by hunger, will attack even a convoy, and travellers must be ready to shoot straight and often if that moment comes. Even an odd couple of wolves will attack a traveller caught alone at a disadvantage.

The peasants take this wolf peril much more seriously than does the average stranger. In some parts that I know, if a peasant meets you travelling after dark and finds that you have left your gun in your cart while you are walking a little way ahead, he will lecture you soundly, and tell you that you are courting death.

Why, some reader may ask, have I written travel talk like this in a serious discussion of the Russian religious situation? It is because I wish you to understand what life in this region means. For it is here that the Soviet Government has sent literally thousands of people, men and women, young and old, and in many cases has sent them to the worst places

without any adequate clothing or provision for winter. Exiles who are not in prison are supposed to receive from 3 to 6 roubles a month for subsidence. Sometimes they do, sometimes not; but whenever I had a direct message from exiles, the plaint was always the same, "Unless our friends send us help, we starve."

The suspect who is ordered into administrative exile in Siberia is often given no opportunity of farewell with his or her family. They may or may not hear of the departure, and have by chance a last word at the railway station. The deportees are moved on by stages, as a rule, having to stop at different prisons en route. If they are consigned to mid or eastern Siberia, they are finally sent off from one of the central cities, such as Novo-Nikolaievsk, Krasnoiarsk, or Tomsk.

It was in these cities that I heard the most moving stories of the life of the exiles. I was just too late to see them depart, for the last parties for the winter had already set out north. But everywhere the tale was the same. Even in Krasnoiarsk, once one of the most prosperous, now one of the most terrorized and poorest cities in Siberia, people along the river route agreed in their accounts of the condition of the pitiable bands marching through from the railway station to the steamers. On one point they were all emphatic. Many of the prisoners had no proper clothing. They had been arrested in summer, and had been forwarded on in summer clothes to face the Siberian winter. They had no hope of obtaining any. In one centre the churchfolk had formed a little hidden organization to gather together garments among themselves, for the ill-clad priests and bishops who passed.

Since a statement that I published earlier has been denied by defenders of the exile system, I may be permitted to quote from a report of the Russian Social Democrats :—

"Especially tragic in this respect is the fate of those who, after serving their terms of banishment in Turkestan, are sentenced to a further term (2 to 3 years) in the extreme north. Removed from tropical Turkestan in summer or autumn, they arrive after a painful migration of several months in Siberia, with its excess of frost. And since as a rule, despite all promises, they are not provided with any warm clothing, their situation may be imagined, especially since many of them have to cover a long distance on foot."

Here is a typical case. Two bishops, Ioniky and Aristarch,

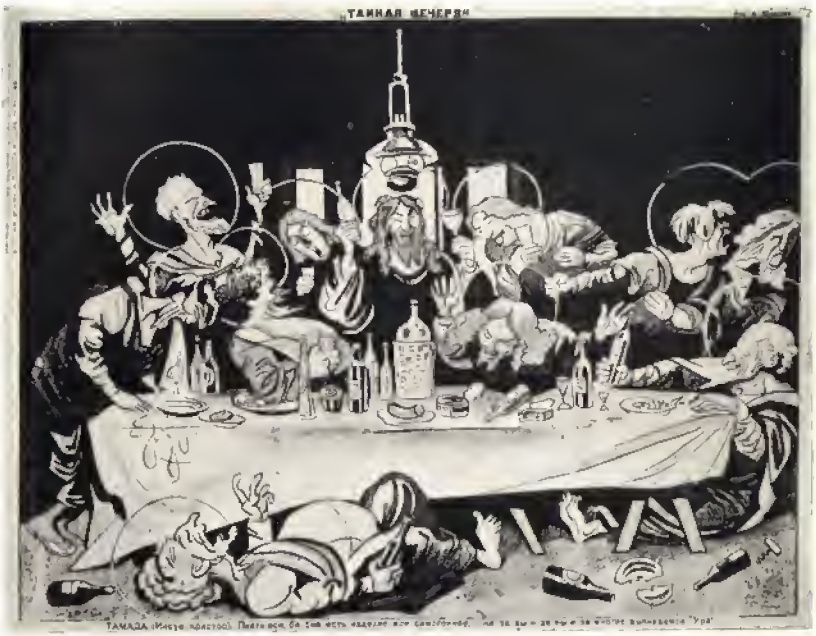
were asked to call at the office of the political police in their district, to answer some questions. They were detained on arrival, and after many weeks' imprisonment were sent to Siberia. It was summer time when they were arrested; now it was autumn, but they were not even allowed to send to their homes for warm clothing. By the time they reached Novo-Nikolaievsk, before going north, their ears and noses were already frozen. Some charitable folk heard of their suffering and managed to pass a few garments to them.

The Metropolitan Agafangel, the Bishop Antoni of Archangel and Bishop Seraphim, the last very old and very weak, passed through Novo-Nikolaievsk one November just before I arrived. At each town where they stopped they had to trudge through the mud and snow, in some cases several miles, carrying their heavy loads from the station to the prison. Some of them were so weak at times that they collapsed and fell to the ground but were dragged up and pushed on by their guards. Word reached Novo-Nikolaievsk later that they had at last reached Narim, their destination, arriving amid heavy snow with their final destination some miles away. They were ordered to walk, but declared that they could not, so finally a sledge was found belonging to the G.P.U. The driver heaped abuse on them and drove as roughly as possible, finally upsetting them in the snow. Then with a jeer he turned back. It was only after the most earnest pleas from the two younger bishops that he consented to take them to their destination.

Bishop Paul Glasvosky and Archbishop Cornily had caused great trouble two years before in Novo-Nikolaievsk prison, because they refused to have their beards cut. A very old and weak priest who was with them was forced to yield, but the two bishops were so troublesome and obstinate over the matter that finally they were sent to the north to a district so remote that there were none but natives there. Their friends were exceedingly anxious about their condition, for chance reports that arrived were very bad. They sent parcels to them, but in the whole time only one parcel seems to have arrived and that was by a chance traveller going to the far north.

Here are some typical letters telling the actualities of the life of the exiles, religious and political:

"This time we have been sent off to a 'cooler' region, namely to Siberia, to the little place N. within the arctic circle 500 versts from the railway. How will our little girl stand this

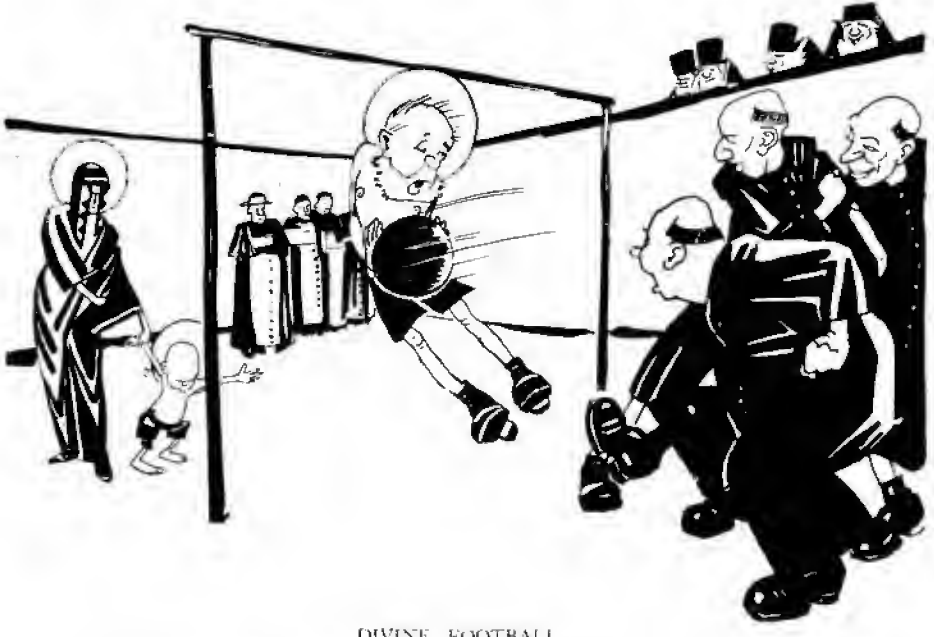


THE LAST SUPPER

Jesus Christ speaks: "Drink all of you, for this is my own distilled whisky, which is being drunk for you, and for us, and for many. Hurrah!"

From *Bezbozhnik* (Without God), Moscow.

Inscription on the side of the picture: "The so-called 'Last Supper' clearly proves that religion establishes, proclaims, and morally excuses drunkenness. To fight against religion is to fight against drunkenness."



DIVINE FOOTBALL

"It has been decided to arrange an international meeting of Catholic sportsmen."

News item.—From *Bezbožnik* (Without God), Moscow.

The figures in the picture represent God the Father, as Goal-keeper, the Virgin Mary and the Infant Jesus in the background, Catholic clergy as spectators, and Jewish rabbis looking over the wall.

sudden change of climate? We were over a month on the way, by rail, ship and sledges. Our experiences were such as hitherto we had only read of in books. The blizzard did not cease during our journey, and we were always losing the way. An icy wind would whistle and howl uncannily, while everything was enveloped in snow. Often the horses would stop still, shiver and refuse to budge. Our breath was literally frozen. The drivers, who are nearly always drunk, used to curse and swear. How often we fell out of the sledge and lay in a ditch, but how glad we were every time we at length reached an inn where we could dry our clothes and get warm at a stove. . . . At last we arrived in N. With the utmost difficulty we found shelter, not in the village itself, but some versts away. The whole village consists of 9 homesteads; all around are marshes, rivers and the taiga. In the winter we get a post once a week, but in autumn and spring on account of the bad roads we are cut off from the outer world for two months. The nearest telegraph office is 30 versts away. . . . Our room is not bad, but the doors and walls have large cracks in them and there is always snow in the room. Do write to us, we live here so lonely. . . .

"You tell me in your letters of the new performances in the theatre and that Lindberg has flown the Atlantic. When I read that I always think of the Siberian tales of Tan: 'There is no Italy, there are no oranges, there is nothing but an Arctic Circle and frozen stockfish.' We feel here like two people who have lost their way in the taiga and the swamps, and only our little girl is with us. The bulk of the population here consists of Ostiaks. They still pray to their wooden idols, but if they have no luck in hunting they beat the idols unmercifully. Culturally the Russian population is almost on the same level. Before the Russians go out on fishing expeditions they pray devoutly in church, but then if they have caught nothing they revile God and the Saviour.

"Yesterday a bear mangled a peasant. That is an everyday thing here. . . . Sometimes I, too, begin to doubt whether there really still is any Italy, any theatre or aeroplanes. It sounds here like a tale. . . ."

. . . . .

"We have been living now for over four months in this forsaken hole. My wife is seriously ill, has been laid

up for seventeen days with dreadful pain. She can eat nothing and is fearfully run down. Only for short spells does the pain cease and allow her to breathe more freely. We do not know what is the matter with her. A woman doctor of the nearest town has been twice; she is doing her best to diagnose the trouble, but cannot make up her mind so easily, for her training is too deficient. The first time she talked of an affection of the spleen and malaria, the second time of kidney inflammation and neuralgia.

"We ought to take her to the chief town of the district, that is a journey by wagon of 500 versts. But she cannot go alone, and I shall hardly get permission to accompany her; or even if I should get it, it will not be so quickly. I have sent a telegram to ask for permission, but the reply will probably arrive only in *ten-fourteen days*. Will not this delay have fatal consequences for my wife? We should have to take the child with us, we could not leave her anywhere here. How good it is that she has stood this hard winter. It is a terrifying thought to fall seriously ill here in winter."

. . . . .

"Five years of migration through prisons and banishment areas have taught us all kinds of things. But the last removal was a bad experience for us. Our boy did indeed stand the trying journey to this forsaken corner of North Siberia without much harm. But our fellow-sufferers, the K——'s, who have a six-months'-old infant on their hands, had a miserable time. Quarters were given to us not in the town but in a small hamlet seventy kilometres behind it. It is still twenty kilometres to the nearest doctor. All around epidemics rage among the children: scarlet fever, diphtheria, chicken-pox. In the very first days, K——, the father, fell ill of erysipelas. Immediately after, his wife, as a result of the insanitary conditions of travel, developed an ulcer on the breast, so that the child had to be fed artificially. A few days later our boy fell ill with high fever. . . .

"Everybody is well again now, but there are great difficulties as to food. No vegetables to be had, not even onions. The main diet of the native population consists of salted stockfish, a horribly stinking fish. . . . Slaughtering for food is done here once a year in winter; then the meat is put in cold storage and so used until the spring. Ninety-nine per cent. of the children here have rickets.

"We get up at five, chop wood, fetch water from the well, light the stove, cook, darn, cut out clothes, wash clothes, and give the boy lessons. By evening one is so tired one can hardly stand up. By two in the afternoon it is so dark that the oil-lamp has to be lit. It is hardly possible to earn anything here. The government dole only suffices for the first five days of the month. Write to us often, letters are our only pleasure here. . . ."

There are thousands of Russian Christians and workers for freedom suffering in this way in Siberia. And yet the chosen spokesman of the greatest of British publicity agencies, the British Broadcasting Corporation, has told us, with all the weight of that Corporation's backing, that there is no religious persecution, properly so-called, in Russia!

CHAPTER XI

PRISON

HOW many people are in prison or in exile in Russia to-day because of their religion? I do not know, and no one can know except the political police. Some fantastic figures have been published by propagandists who, believing that any stick is good enough to beat the Bolshevists, invent their statistics and imagine their atrocities. These writers do the cause of reform real harm and have led many moderate men to distrust all statements about the Russian situation.

The Patriarch Tikhon, in conversation with me shortly before his death, said that according to the best information that he could obtain, about 100 bishops and 10,000 priests were in prison or exile. In every prison that I entered while in Russia, and in every district, with two exceptions, that I visited during my last year there, I heard accounts of the arrest of Churchmen, both priests and laymen. My journeys during that year extended from the European frontiers to Vladivostok and from the Arctic Circle to the Altai Mountains in Central Asia.

Statistics that I have since obtained have at each stage shown that the total of exiles of all classes is rapidly rising all the time.

A list was published of the Russian prelates in prison or exile on 1st April, 1927. This list gave the names of 117 Metropolitans, Archbishops, and Bishops, exiled and in prison, some of them in the central prison of the G.P.U. in Moscow, others scattered through the uttermost parts of the Republic, in Tobolsk, Turkestan, the Zirian district, Solovetsky, Askhabad, and elsewhere.

At every point where I was able to test this list from my own knowledge I found it to be right. In addition, there were forty prelates of whom all trace was lost and it was impossible to tell what had become of them.

Some exile districts have increased tenfold in population

in five years. The most recent figures—in the autumn of 1929—indicated the number of exiles in Siberia at about 300,000 and of the prisoners in the concentration camps of Northern Russia at between 30,000 and 35,000. By no means all of these are victims of religious persecution. The Siberian exiles include a majority of political and economic offenders and the main inhabitants of the concentration camps are criminals.

A prominent British Baptist endeavoured for some weeks to learn the total of Baptist ministers and church workers now under arrest. At the end he had to admit that he could not. He would obtain news of a few here, of another in a different district, and so on. But the authorities, by breaking up the central organization of the Baptists and by isolating the different congregations, prevented the facts from being known.

The total of exiles is rising rapidly in 1930 because of the campaign against the peasants. It is certain that, apart from this increase, the amount of repression in Russia to-day far exceeds the worst years of Czarism. The Social Democratic Party is perhaps the best informed independent organization on Russian affairs, for despite all that the Government can do, it still maintains a secret skeleton party throughout the Soviet State. It published in its weekly paper, "*R.S.D.*," a list of death sentences reported in the Soviet Press in October and November, 1929. These totalled 247, many of them being on members of religious sects charged with political offences.

The black years of Czarism were between 1905-1908, when the risings of 1905 were followed by a period of severe repression. The bi-monthly average then, given in official reports to the Duma, was 193.

Religious offences are regarded by the G.P.U. as coming under political crimes, although religious people are denied the rights of political prisoners. Political crimes are divided into three main classes—espionage, counter-revolution, and anti-Soviet party activity. Religious offences fall under the second group. The Churchmen are regarded as counter-revolutionists, a group which includes all persons who are supposed to be political adversaries of the Soviet Government, from active Czarist plotters to harmless partisans of liberal views.

In the early days of the Revolution, the horrors of the

Russian prisons were almost beyond belief. Whites and Reds rivalled one another in their cruelty towards their captives. Then came a time when deliberate cruelty slackened, but neglect and poverty caused almost unendurable suffering. I was in some of the prisons then, in one cell of Gorokovaya in Petrograd, with thirty beds and seventy prisoners, and in the working prisons of Ufa, where, out of a thousand prisoners, 414 had died in the three and a half months before my visit, 169 of hunger.

Since those days there has been, generally, great improvement, especially in a few model establishments in Moscow and other centres which are shown to foreign visitors. But many prisons are still terrible places, dirty, overcrowded, poorly warmed, and badly administered. Overcrowding, in particular, is general. I might mention, for example, the filthy concentration camp at Novo-Nikolaievsk, and the women's prison in Ekaterinburg, where rats and vermin long swarmed, and where was for long such overcrowding that one inmate had to curl herself up on the top of a water barrel at nights to sleep. I know, because my friends have been prisoners in both of these places.

The powers of the political police are practically unlimited. They send for anyone they please, keep him or her for weeks or months at their will in prison, and treat the suspect as they please.

The most noted and dreaded prison is the House of the Angel, Loubyanka Two, Moscow, the headquarters of the All-Russian political police (Ogpu). Loubyanka Two is a large building on an island site in the heart of the business quarter of the capital. Street cars pass its doors all day and almost all night long. It was originally an insurance office, and the statue of an angel long crowned its front. The lower windows are whitened over and barred. One finds lights in its windows and cars outside its gateways throughout the night, for Loubyanka never sleeps. Soldiers on sentry stand around, and if one lingers on the pavement nearby, gazing at it or talking to a friend, you are quickly bidden to move on.

When I first arrived in Moscow, many of the outer windows had iron screens, which permitted ventilation but prevented the captives inside from seeing anything but the sky. These, in time, disappeared.

Inside, Loubyanka is a very rabbit warren of offices and

cells. There is no place for the prisoners to exercise, except a very small courtyard in the centre. Underground are two floors of cells, which differ very much. Some are quite good; others are unspeakably bad. Four of my friends have told me their experiences here. The first, whose case gave claim for special consideration, had a very good time, and described her life in Loubyanka as a rest cure. The second found her cell clean, but her treatment severe. The third had his nerve broken by a week's constant examination and described conditions as very bad. The fourth, who was an elderly man of great learning, was put into an overcrowded, dirty, underground cell, where he had to lie on the stones. His fellow-prisoners were, many of them, diseased and filthy. The weeks spent in that underground den were a purgatory. But he is a hardy and simple soul, and prison did not break him. A fifth did not tell me her tale. She went mad and so could not. The warders are themselves strictly disciplined, and there is none of the comradeship between warders and captives that is found in many other Russian establishments. The most elaborate care is taken to prevent suicides, even the long batches of oakum used in Russia for washing now being prohibited because a prisoner once killed himself with a strand of it.

An arrested person is first kept in complete isolation for eight days, during which no communication is allowed from the outside world. After that, his friends are usually permitted to send him food of a suitable kind.

During the eight days the suspect is often put through what is known as the "frightening process", and a very effective process it is. A man came from the Loubyanka to a house that I know, after only a week's confinement, so broken down that he could do nothing but lie for two days on his bed and weep.

Men tell us of the hot cell, where a prisoner is kept thirty hours in a temperature of the hot room of a Turkish bath and given no water; and of the cold cell, where he is sent with very few clothes, to be frozen into submission. How far these are true, I cannot say. One girl who had come out of Loubyanka told of a terrible electric chair; probably what was the matter with her was electric nerves. It is true, however, that the punishment cells in Loubyanka, deep underground, very damp, very cold and overrun with rats, are among the worst of their kind, and

that methods of mental terrorism are freely applied where necessary to extract confessions from prisoners.

The process of cross-examination is an ordeal dreaded by most. In serious cases it is regularly done between the hours of twelve and three in the morning. The prisoner is roused suddenly from his sleep and is hurried up, with scarce time to dress, into the examining official's room. Almost before he is awake questions are rained on him. There is nothing new about this method, but here it is carried to its full extent, and very successfully.

During the first period the prisoners are kept entirely apart from their friends, who are not even told where they are. The G.P.U. investigators are many of them skilled psychologists, and employ persuasion or terror according to the mentality of their victim. In the early days, physical violence was very frequent, but this is not nearly so much brought into use to-day, the more common plan being to work on the imagination of the prisoner and frighten him. One favourite device still employed is to threaten to have the prisoner immediately shot, if he does not answer questions. A soldier is called in and, after due and deliberate warning, fires apparently straight at the prisoner, but contrives that the bullet strikes a few inches above his head. The victim has undergone all the terrors of death without dying. If he is not then willing to speak, the same farce is gone through again and again—the bullet each time coming nearer.

"I have never known a prisoner need this more than three times before his tongue loosened, except one," said an expert in the use of this method (this expert was not from Loubyanka) to me. "She was a peasant woman in the Ukraine, and we wanted to make her tell where her husband was. When the soldier fired and the bullet just hit above her head, she jeered at him, and asked what kind of a soldier he was, and told him to shoot straight if he dared. After the fourth bullet we gave her up in despair."

Butyrski, the great prison in the suburbs of Moscow, to which prisoners are passed on after their process in Loubyanka is finished, is not spoken of so badly. "It is less clean and less hard than Loubyanka", is the general verdict. Yet one thing that happened in Butyrski when I was there does not read very happily. A number of prisoners became discontented with their treatment and started a "humming" strike;

every prisoner humming as long and as loudly as he could. It is said that about the same time some of the prisoners killed, or attempted to kill, one of the chief warders. Of this it is difficult to obtain exact evidence. But the "hummers" were handled very thoroughly. They were compelled to strip, only being allowed one single undershirt each. Then they were put in the worst cells and left. The weather was still cold, and the only food they were given was one small slice of black bread a day. It was intended to keep them in this fashion for a fortnight, but at the end of eight or nine days most of them were so nearly dead that their ordeal had to be relaxed.

It is curious that just about this time the Soviet Government brought to trial a number of old Czarist gaolers for cruelty to prisoners in the days of Nicholas. In one hall I listened to the story of suffering prisoners a quarter of a century ago. Outside another building, within half an hour's walk, my friends heard the sounds of prisoners protesting against their ill-treatment.

The prisons of Tomsk are historical. Here was, and is to this day, one of the great centres for distributing exiles and "politicals" to the Arctic. There are two gaols in Tomsk; a large central working prison across the river, and an old building at the other end of the city behind the university. I knew these prisons before, and was given opportunity to visit them again. My visit, as is usual, was made in the evening. Of the working prison I would rather not say much. The criminals are herded together indiscriminately in large barrack-rooms, and are supposed to be learning trades. Frankly, I found little in this prison that was good.

A week or two before my arrival there had been a hunger strike there. The soldier guards had beaten two prisoners whom they had brought to the gaol with their rifles. When the men protested they beat them again. The prisoners who saw this declared a hunger strike, and a number of others joined them. As I was passing from barrack cell to barrack cell I heard some voices behind one closed door. "Why don't you come in and see us here?" But my guide hurried me past that door. The hunger strike had been broken. Possibly its victims were in that room.

The old prison, where "politicals" and religious offenders are mostly kept, is a typical Czarist Russian gaol, with high fencing outside, iron-barred entrance-way, thick walls, and

narrow staircases. It is divided into a number of cells holding from two to about fifty prisoners each.

I found the prison much better on my second visit. The place had been cleaned up. The drainage was formerly offensively bad and the building none too sweet. Now it gave the impression of being the cleanest prison I visited in Russia.

The atmosphere was wholesome. The walls of the corridors and cells were stained with bright colours, mostly pink, often with decorated friezes. The prisoners looked clean, their linen was clean, and they were evidently sufficiently fed. Above all, there was about them the lack of the hang-dog air one often associates with prisoners. They looked animated, spoke freely, and made their requests to the inspector who accompanied me without hesitation.

This prison has its own choral society, an extensive library, and its own brightly decorated theatre, where prisoners and warders play not merely revolutionary dramas, but their own productions and the classical pieces of Andriève Sava.

I was taken first to the women's quarter, and on demanding to see political prisoners I was shown one small cell, the smallest in the prison, where two women sat at a table reading. The table was clean, and to the side of it were some writing materials and some linen, as though they had been sewing. The cell, I noticed, had quite a small window, the smallest of any in the building.

Both women were shabbily dressed. One was in dark colours, with valenky on her feet, and a poor shawl over her shoulders, which she nervously clutched and put to her mouth. She was a Leningrad University student, who had been sent into exile to Tomsk and allowed to enter the University there. This is proof enough that her crime was not a serious one. She had been getting on well with her examinations when she was suddenly re-arrested and thrown into Tomsk prison. I asked her the reason. She could give none except that the local authorities did not wish her to pass her examinations. She had been reading the Russian edition of Vera Figner's story of her long imprisonment in Schüsselberg.

The second woman, who wore an old black skirt and a long red blouse, had a Russian edition of Scott's "Rob Roy". Her eyes were aflame with an unnatural light, and it

was clear that long imprisonment was beginning to affect her mind.

She started to talk in high, impassioned tones, declaring that she was a Maximalist, one of those who had helped the Bolshevists to conquer in the October Revolution. The Bolshevists had broken their promise to her people and thrown her into prison.

"You are ashamed," she said, turning to the inspector and the warders. "You are ashamed of what you have done. That is why you have kept me in prison for a year and eight months at Novo-Nikolaievsk. Now you are going to send me to Narim, to the Arctic!"

I asked her how she was treated; did she have food enough? She replied that she did. "But the great trouble," she said, "is not food, it is clothes. I have no warm clothes. I came to Novo-Nikolaievsk undressed (the Russian word for inadequately clothed) and would have remained so had not my friends helped me. A group of anarchists were brought here recently from Archangel with their children, quite undressed, and they are having to go up to the Arctic to freeze to death there."

The inspector interrupted. "But you do not know that we will not give them clothes," he said.

"I know that you *never* give clothes," she replied bitterly, with hot passion.

The prison officials looked nervous but they did not interrupt her. When, however, I asked to see some more political prisoners, they explained that these were the only ones there were.

I went into one cell and renewed my acquaintance with a murderess whom I had met before—murder is one of the commonest and most mildly punished of crimes here. From her I went to another cell, where a plain-looking, quiet woman was standing near a stove. A very pretty little girl of eight, primly dressed and with her hair well brushed, looked shyly at us from another part of the room. This cell struck me by its great neatness. The woman was a teacher, charged with influencing the pupils in her school against the Soviet Government. She and her child were on their way to exile in the Arctic. "But you told me that you had no more political prisoners," I said to the inspector. "She is not a political prisoner; she is a criminal," came the reply. She was not a member of any political organization!

There were a number of priests here, all given long sentences for politico-religious offences. One priest had organized the prison choral society.

Two other cells that were of great interest to me were filled with men from Soviet Government Departments and trading institutions, charged with offences such as economic incapacity, culpable lack of success in their undertakings, and dishonesty. These were the same type of men that one would find under happier circumstances taking part in the festival of some commercial organizations. They had carved out chessmen from blocks of wood, and were amusing themselves quietly during the winter evening with home-made games.

The Russian Social Democratic Party, which now has its headquarters in Berlin, recently made a full report on Russian prison conditions, which contains much valuable information.

"All intercourse between the individual cells or with those in solitary confinement is most strictly prohibited and rendered impossible by rigorous regulations. To walk with others in the prison-yard is as a rule no longer permitted. The prisoners are allowed to exchange correspondence only with their *immediate* direct relatives (the same applies to receiving gifts and parcels of books). Walks are reduced to a minimum. In Verchne-Uralsk the inmates may only write and receive one letter every three months, while here again only 'legal' relatives are eligible. Correspondence with wives is only permitted when the wife bears the same name, which incidentally under the new marriage laws is no longer at all necessary in Soviet Russia. In the same prison of Verchne-Uralsk prisoners who meet anywhere by chance are not even allowed to exchange greetings. The persecution of the prisoners often takes the most repulsive and petty forms. In some gaols the prisoners may no longer receive from their families dried vegetables and fruit, chocolate and sweets. In Verchne-Uralsk the inmates are forbidden to use the lavatories more than twice a day. And always, even in the case of women, male warders must be present.

"Moreover, the right to visits from relatives has been rendered quite illusory for most of the prisoners who hail from European Russia by their transference to the regions of the Ural and of Siberia (Verchne-Uralsk, Tcheljabinsk,

Tobolsk), so that in reality the prisoners are wholly cut off from the outer world.

"It is needless to say that this extreme aggravation of the régime in political prisons was bound to provoke desperate defensive measures from the prisoners, which very often have assumed extremely tragic forms. Even to-day their resistance is not quite broken. Hunger-strikes, desperate acts of obstruction, and suicide have become common phenomena of Russian prison life. Given the complete exclusion of publicity, no freedom of the Press, no effective supervision of prison administration, this fight was bound to assume the most extreme forms.

"It would scarcely be possible to name a single prison where this kind of struggle has not raged; among the banished or incarcerated Socialists scarcely one can be found who has not gone through several hunger-strikes lasting for days and other desperate conflicts. Thus in 1925-6 the well-known Social-revolutionaries, *Gotz*, *Timofejev*, and others underwent several hunger-strikes of 15-16 consecutive days in order to force the G.P.U. to honour its own pledges. The old Social-democratic worker, *Devjatkin*, the leader of the Russian printers, starved with one slight intermission for 24 days in order to affect the release of his tuberculous daughter detained by the G.P.U. when they were unable for a while to catch the father, etc., etc. The Bolshevist prison authorities proceed with their customary cynicism and brutality against these Socialists who even in gaol will not abandon the defence of their human dignity and rights. Since the winter 1920-21, when the new method was for the first time deliberately tested in the 'ideal prison' of Butyrski, mass ill-treatment of the 'mutinous' prisoners has become a system. At the slightest provocation warders and soldiers of the special Che-ka detachments swarm into the prison, force their way into the cells, drag the half-clad prisoners out of bed and beat them atrociously, without sparing women or sick people. Thus it happened in 1921 at Jaroslav, thus, too, in May, 1923, in the aforesaid Butyrski prison at Moscow, where two anarchist women, one of them pregnant, were so ill-treated that the pregnant woman suffered a miscarriage. Similar cases occurred in 1925 and 1926 in Tobolsk, in 1927 and 1928 in Jaroslav, in Verchne-Uralsk and Tcheljabinsk. In reply to the obstruction by the prisoners at Jaroslav in the *winter* of 1927, the separate

cells where the prisoners sat were pumped knee-deep with icy water and the prisoners thrust with the most brutal violence into the cold penal cells. In the prison of Verchne-Uralsk, where in the autumn of 1926 over 200 Socialists of varying tendencies, including 50 women, were confined, the movement of protest by the prisoners was started by a 17-day hunger-strike of the non-party worker, *Beljankin* (from the Moscow factory 'Dynamo').—The prisoners, who had long been incensed over the brutal régime, came forward on behalf of some fellow-sufferers who, it was said, were to be forcibly fed by the authorities. The prisoners' action was, however, short-lived, since half-drunk soldiers of the Che-ka at once occupied the prison, ill-treated the prisoners, and knocked everything to pieces in the cells. Particularly marked was the violence of the soldiers in the women's cells. The Social-revolutionary woman *Tsheshnevska* was thrown to the ground and beaten till she bled. Similar atrocious violence was suffered by the Zionist Socialist woman *Holzmann* and some other women whose names were not published. Nor did these brutes spare the sick comrades, who were housed in a special cell in the south wing of the prison. On this occasion also sore ill-treatment was suffered by the old Social-Democratic worker *Strukov*, who later *committed suicide*. These excesses lasted without respite for three days, during the 1st, 2nd and 3rd November.

"In March, 1929, 63 imprisoned Trotskyists in the gaol at Tobolsk went on hunger-strike, demanding a trial, provision of warm clothes, and so on. The prison administration replied to this protest by the Opposition Communists with brutal measures of repression and ill-treatment. According to the report of the left Communist Press, one result was the death of the old revolutionary, E. *Dreizer*, one of the heroes of the Bolshevist civil war, decorated with two Orders of the 'Red Flag'.

"Sometimes not even any 'action' by the prisoners is needed to provoke brutal proceedings by the prison authorities. Sentries who shoot at prisoners through the windows are a common phenomenon; often, indeed, the soldiers have received a reward for so doing. On 17th (by other accounts the 3rd) February, 1928, in the yard of the prison at Chiva (Central Asia), the warder on sentry duty killed the prisoner Samuel *Bronnstein* (a Zionist Socialist from Odessa) by a revolver shot in the back of his head. This happened without

any ground or occasion whatever, before the eyes of Bronnstein's comrades during their daily walk. The prisoners thereupon went on hunger-strike, demanding an inquiry, but their demand was not complied with. The murderer was indeed subsequently put on trial, but he received five years' imprisonment with *suspension of sentence*, i.e., in fact, got off scotfree.

"If prisoners in normal health are thus treated, the sick hardly come off any better. Only in the rarest cases does the G.P.U. give consideration to an inmate's state of health. Those who fall sick, often even severe cases, have in every respect to share the fate of their normal fellow-sufferers. In fact, the bulk of the conflicts in prisons and concentration camps, mostly resulting in acts of obstruction, hunger-strike and maltreatment, have risen from this disregard of the authorities for the sick comrades, whom the healthy ones sought to take under their protection. But only exceptionally have positive successes been obtained. Thus it happens that numerous prisoners come out of prison as cripples and invalids, or are driven to die in confinement."

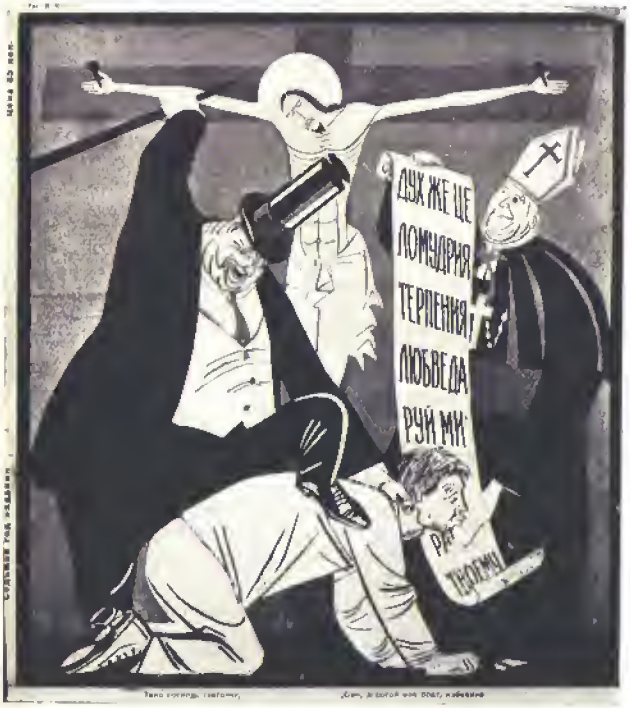
CHAPTER XII

HOW THE PERSECUTION BEGAN

"RELIGION was corrupt, reactionary, and oppressive in the days of Czarism, and so religion has to suffer to-day," say the apologists for the Communist policy of persecution. To some extent this is true. Czarist bureaucracy used the wealth, the power, and the organization of the Greek Church as its own instrument. Within the Church itself, many great abuses sprang up. The foulness and fleshliness prevailing in many of the monasteries for men (the word "monastery" is used in Russia for religious establishments for both men and women) was notorious. The Church itself combined a very beautiful worship with what seemed, to Western observers, gross superstition. To a considerable degree, it divorced religion from conduct and from social activity. The sceptic had his cheap sneer. "The burglar crosses himself before he sets out to rob, and the woman of the street prays before her Ikon for a good harvest of men who will buy her body."

There was another side to the Orthodox Greek Church, of which we do not hear so much—the vast multitudes of earnest priests throughout the country, who were true fathers of their people, and the very real and sincere life of faith of multitudes of quiet souls. But what impressed the world at large was the glaring wrong, the flagrant immorality that was permitted, the nepotism and the needless accumulation of wealth for ornate religious display among a poverty-ridden people. Czars, nobles, and great merchants tried to atone for the grossness of their lives by the liberality of their religious gifts. And so churches and monasteries heaped up treasure, greater than that of any other.

Peter the Great destroyed the Patriarchate, to secure for himself and his successors the same absolute power over the Church that he had over the State. The Czar exercised his authority through the Holy Synod, which in matters of Church administration was absolute. In the name of the

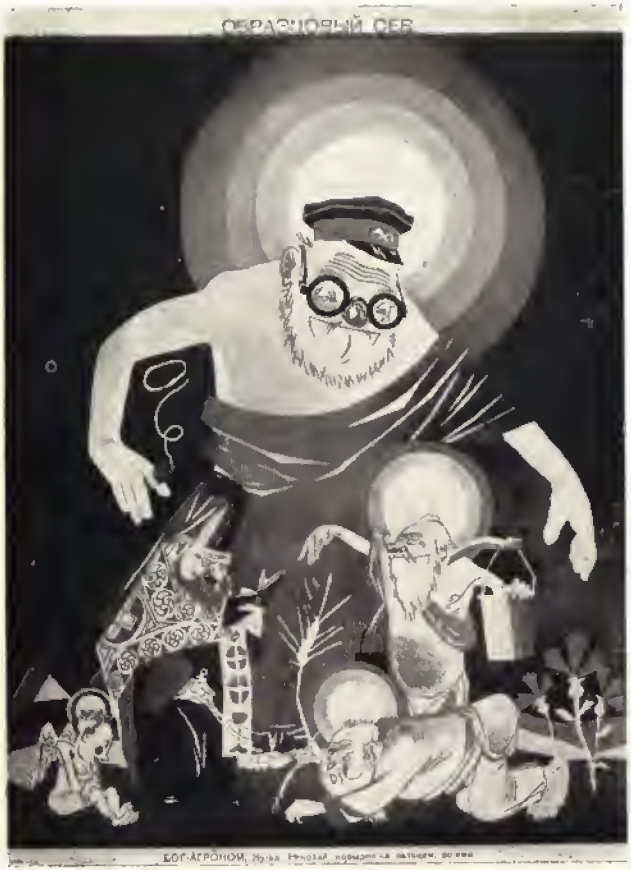


GOD SPEAKS WHILE THE BOURGEOISIE BEATS

"This thrashing, dear brother, is for your consolation."

From *Bezboznik* (Without God), Moscow.

On the chart held by the Catholic bishop is written: "Give to thy servant O Lord, the spirit of chastity, patience, and love."



GOD THE FARMER

"Now, St. Nicholas, dig the earth with your finger to the glory of my name, and you, Elijah, sprinkle it with holy water."

From *Bezboznik* (Without God), Moscow.

Czar, it strove to hunt out heresy, dissent, and superstition. It kept the Church in a state of intellectual slavery. Every sermon by a parish priest had to be doubly censored, by the senior priest and by the bishop, before delivery. The Church was given the care of education, and its schools were most of them bad. Four people out of five throughout Russia could neither read nor write.

The Church was no more free than the Press was free, or than assembly was free. The Chief Procurator of the Holy Synod, Pobyedonostseff, was a narrow, bitter tyrant, a hater of freedom, and a hater of democracy. When Churchmen showed signs of unrest, he disciplined them, however high their rank. Twenty-eight bishops and many priests were sent into exile during the reign of the last Nicholas. The drunken priest or lecherous monk could escape with a mild reprimand or none. The liberal Churchman was fortunate if he escaped confinement for life in the cells of some remote monastery.

When at last popular unrest forced Nicholas to make some concessions to freedom, he took away with one hand most of what he gave with the other.

Up to 1905 there had been little religious liberty. For a Russian to leave the Orthodox Greek Church was in itself a crime, rendering him liable to severe punishment. The Old Believers, a strictly orthodox sect, had been sent into exile generations before to the Arctic and Siberia and still lived with their families there. I have found them on the borders of Mongolia and among the Zirians in the north.

The Empress Anne issued in 1835 a Ukast granting religious tolerance but defining it as freedom of worship but not the freedom of making converts, which was forbidden under heavy penalties.

At Easter, 1905, the Czar Nicholas issued a decree permitting Russians to change their faith and join another communion. But the Protestant clergymen who advised the Russian to leave the Orthodox Church was liable to heavy punishment, while the convert could be thrown into prison to ensure his appearance at the trial. On 3rd October, 1905, the Czar signed a further decree hailed by the Press of the world as "the charter of liberty for one-tenth of the human race", in which he promised liberty based on inviolability of the individual, freedom of conscience, subject, opinion, and association, and the calling of a really representative Russian

Parliament, the Duma. Then, having called the Duma, he set about thwarting it, depriving it of its powers, and curtailing the new liberty of the people.

In the Church, as in the nation, a feeling of deep dissatisfaction with this state of things was growing up. When the first Revolution came, in April, 1917, the Church resolved to recover its independence, and in November, 1917, it revived the high office of Patriarch, electing the Metropolitan Tikhon, a very capable and deeply religious ecclesiastic. Tikhon had been for some time head of the Orthodox Church in America, returning to Russia at first to the see of Yaroslav, and then to Moscow.

The election of the Patriarch took place while the fighting around the Kremlin was actively proceeding, between the Socialist Government and the Bolshevists. One of Tikhon's first acts was to issue a protest against the methods of the Bolshevists, and to summon Churchmen against them. He probably thought, as did most people then, that the Bolshevist revolt was no more than a flash in the pan.

But as the revolt grew into civil war, Tikhon, recognizing the danger to the Church, did all in his power to keep the Church neutral. He even refused, despite the most urgent pleas, to send a private blessing to leaders of the White Armies.

Some bishops, particularly in Siberia, flung themselves into the campaign on behalf of the Whites and raised White Cross Guards which fought in the field. Other bishops, few in number, took the side of the Bolshevists. The feelings of the Church as a whole were undoubtedly and inevitably opposed to Communism.

The Civil War ended, as all the world knows, in the complete triumph in the field of the Bolshevist armies. The bishops who had fought actively against them were killed or imprisoned, or fled the country. Some were put to death under very terrible circumstances, but I, for one, do not raise this point against the Bolshevist Government to-day. The Civil War was a thing of horror; the nation seemed to go mad and the atrocities that were committed on both sides were unspeakable.

Meanwhile, the Bolshevist Government was moving steadily against the Church. The first Revolutionary Government had taken education out of the Church's hands. On 23rd January, 1918, the new Soviet Government issued a decree separating the Church from the State, declaring

denominational equality and freedom and taking over all the property of the Church. Any citizen might adhere to any Church or adhere to none. All religious customs and ceremonies at State or public gatherings were forbidden, although there was to be free practice of religious customs so far as they did not disturb the public peace. The religious oath was abolished and religious teaching in schools was forbidden, citizens retaining the right to teach or be taught religion in a private capacity. All the property of the existing Church and religious societies was henceforth the property of the people, but the free use of all buildings was to be given for their congregations. Under this decree the Government gradually seized the great assets of the monasteries and all the private stores and wealth of the Churches. Numerous priests were arrested, and the heads of the various Councils and Synods had their homes constantly searched. The Government was feeling its way. It feared to provoke popular uprisings by any too apparent attack on the practice of Christianity, and was seeking a good excuse for an anti-religious campaign.

This excuse came early in 1922. The famine that was now waging around the Volga and in other parts of Russia was one of the most terrible ever known. People were dying by the scores of thousands. Other countries in answer to the Soviet Government's appeal were rushing in relief and scenes were witnessed more piteous than war at its worst. The Government sprang a demand on the Church that it should surrender its treasures for the relief of famine victims.

Here the Church was guilty of a great mistake. This was the hour when it should have made a gesture of renunciation and freely tendered all. One or two Archbishops did, and reaped their reward. The ostentatious splendour of the Church treasures had long aroused criticism. Men did not know that many of these treasures supposed to be of incredible value were of much less worth than they seemed, that articles supposed to be of sacred gold had merely a thin coating of gold outside, that cloaks and vestments decked with endless pearls and other jewels were decked often enough with pearls that were dead and jewels that were inferior.

Dr. Arthur Judson Brown, the great American religious leader, had already told in the days before the Bolshevists

came into power, how the sight of this wealth affected him:

"While hundreds of thousands of peasants were starving and famine relief funds were being raised in Great Britain and America, the domes of St. Isaac's Cathedral in St. Petersburg and of the Cathedral of the Holy Saviour in Moscow shone with a covering of pure gold, that on the former alone costing $250,000. A shrine of solid silver in the Monastery of St. Alexander Nevski weighs 3,250 pounds. The picture of the Virgin of Vladimir in the Cathedral of the Assumption in the Kremlin at Moscow is adorned with jewels conservatively estimated to be worth $225,000. Our guide told us $1,000,000. The visitor to Russian churches is amazed by the lavishness and gorgeousness of display on every hand—mosaic floors, walls of agate and jasper, shrines of solid silver or of copper heavily overlaid with beaten gold, stately columns of malachite, each of the eight Corinthian pillars in St. Isaac's Cathedral, the gift of Prince Demidoff, costing $200,000, mitres and croziers studded with precious stones, and priestly vestments stiff with cloth of gold and profusely embroidered with pearls. And as one leaves this splendour, he is greeted at the door by scores of beggars—feeble old women holding out trembling hands, and pitifully wan children shivering in rags and emaciated with hunger; while in hundreds of country districts whole families are dying of starvation. There are costly churches in other countries, but I know of none which have such enormous wealth in a form which could be so easily converted into food without impairing the usefulness of the buildings for religious worship."

The Patriarch offered to co-operate to a certain extent and some of the bishops would no doubt have done much more had they not believed that the yield from the Church treasures would be largely used not for the relief of the hungry but for the engorgement of the Bolshevists themselves. Patriarch Tikhon ordered the Church people to resist.

The result was exceedingly pathetic. All over the land Soviet officials backed by troops visited the Churches and took away what they thought proper. Priests tried to stop them as best they could, not with arms, for they had no weapons, but by closing their doors and even by forming barriers of bodies before their altars. Christian women gathered in the Churches to pray that this desecration might

be averted. Then came the arrests, the processions of Church folk, priests, men and women as prisoners through the streets, and the subsequent condemnations.

I saw Brusilova, daughter-in-law of the Czarist General who had subsequently come to work with the Communists, as she was led to trial in Moscow. Her own husband had been shot by the Whites for his supposed sympathies with the Communists. "Will no one help God against these Jews?" she cried, when the soldiers came to her church. As she stood in Court, under the harsh examination of the Communist prosecutor, her face was the face of a Madonna. The foulest insults did not disturb her calm. When she was sentenced to death, she smiled gently. "I am ready," she said. "You can do me no harm, for I have made my peace with God."

In the city of Moscow, fifty-four priests and churchfolk were brought to book in the theatre of the great Polytechnic Museum, where two thousand spectators watched the staged trial. Some of the priests were old and white-haired, some of the women were gentle mothers, ill-placed here.

The crowning moment came when the Patriarch Tikhon and his chief assistant, the Metropolitan Nikander, were called to the witness-box. Tikhon denied that he was engaged in counter-revolutionary activity and declared that his only aim was to preserve the Canon Law. The property of the Church was not his to give, and when the State took it, they took it not from him but from God.

A score of the priests and churchfolk were sentenced to death, Brusilova among them, but the sentences of about half of them, including Brusilova, were afterwards reduced to long terms of imprisonment. Numbers more were sent to prison. What was happening in Moscow was happening all over the country. Ten of the Moscow priests were executed, and in all forty-five were put to death and 250 given long terms of imprisonment. Tikhon was arrested, charged with treason against the State.

Among the most moving scenes at this time was the arrest and trial of the Archbishop of Moscow, Benjamin, a Churchman noted for his simplicity, piety, and freedom from political entanglements. Let me quote my earlier description, so far as I know the only account by a foreign observer:

*The Archbishop and a large number of his advisers and supporters were arrested in May, and brought to open trial in the hall of the old Nobles' Club, in Petrograd, the trial starting on 11th June. Among the prisoners were the Archimandrite Sergei, the Bishop of Kronstadt, the Deans of the three cathedrals in Petrograd, St. Isaac's, Kazan, and the Troitsky, Professor Novitsky, a famous lawyer and Chairman of the Church Council, the Rev. Professor Ognieff, Kovaharov, a lawyer, and Shein, a former member of the Duma. In all they numbered over three score, altogether as distinguished a group as you could find, even in Petrograd, the intellectual capital of Russia.

The prisoners, it was charged, had conspired to resist the decrees of the Soviet Government. When the authorities informed Monseigneur Benjamin that the treasures were to be taken for famine relief, he replied in a formal document, in which he asked three things: (1) Proof that the money could not be raised in any other way; (2) guarantee that the money should not be used for any other purpose than famine relief; and (3) that the consent of the Patriarch in Moscow should be obtained. He added to his offence by at once publishing the document.

He was summoned to the Smolny Institute, the headquarters of the Petrograd Soviet. He came attended by counsel. He withdrew his first and third points, but clung to the second. "Give us assurances that our money will really go in famine relief," he insisted. On his return home he issued yet another document to the people.

I learned what followed by the words of one of his Bolshevist accusers. "As a result of this, a restless mob demonstrated on 15th March at the Kazan Cathedral; a mob beat the militia in Sennya Street on 16th March, and the soldiers had to be called out; stones were thrown at the militia and officials at the Church of Rozhedstovo on 14th April, there being alarm, violence, and mob rule. Similar violence took place at the Putilov Zastava on 27th April and 4th May." The Putilov Zastava is in the midst of one of the great working-class districts of Petrograd. Riots there gave real cause for alarm.

The trial lasted nearly a month, not ending until early in July. The authorities attempted to prove that Benjamin

*From "Russia Before Dawn".

and his supporters were anti-revolutionists, that they were in touch with the anti-Bolshevist bishops outside Russia who had summoned the Karlsberg Conference (a conference of Orthodox bishops that stood by the old Imperial house), and that they were plotting to overthrow the Government. The chief judge of the Revolutionary Tribunal was Nakovschenko, a technical engineer.

Few of the friends of the prisoners could obtain admission to the trial. Many of them assembled outside, and when the prisoners were brought in each morning and led out each evening they found crowds of Churchmen singing hymns, praying, and asking their blessing. One night cavalry made their appearance, closed every exit, and made prisoners of all the crowd.

There were some dramatic moments. Vvedensky, a leading reform priest, was supposed by many—falsely, as he afterwards assured me—to have instigated the arrest of the Archbishop. On the opening day, when Vvedensky was leaving the court, a woman threw a stone at him, hitting him on the head and inflicting a nasty wound.

Three witnesses, after giving evidence in favour of the prisoners, were themselves arrested. The friends of the prisoners complained that other witnesses were so terrorized by this that they dared not say what they would. When after the tribunal considered that it had heard enough, it refused to admit further evidence. It refused the prisoners the right to consult certain documents they desired.

At last the ordeal drew to a close. The hour had come for the accused to make their last pleas. One after another arose to disclaim the charge of having plotted against the Government. Their action, they declared, had been dictated by a sense of religious duty. They spoke quietly, without gesture or emotion, as men who had already abandoned hope on earth and made their peace with God.

It came to the Archbishop's turn. The little, heavily-bearded man, dressed in his ecclesiastical robe, stood alone, facing the court. "Five years ago," he said, "I was chosen Archbishop because all workers and the poor loved me. They loved me because I love and worked for the poor and the starving. I am no politician. I did what I did because it was my duty to my God and the Church." He went on to tell how some time before the Government had called on him to visit revolting districts and calm the minds of the

people. He did so, and the revolt ceased. "If I am sent to my death," he added, "I will take it that it is the will of God."

His final words were spoken very quietly, but they seemed to penetrate every corner of that great hall. Even the fiercely hostile audience was momentarily quietened. "Boshia valia ja umru Christianin." (If it is the will of God that I should die, I die as a true Christian.)

On the following evening sentences were passed. Every care had been taken to secure a right audience. The relatives of the prisoners sat near the front. The rest of the hall was crowded with members of the Communist Party, for on this occasion party tickets of membership were sufficient to secure admission. Every ticket was so carefully scrutinized, however, that it was not possible to start the proceedings, timed for six-thirty, until eight.

It was a typical Petrograd summer evening. The city was as light as noon. Heavy forces of troops were all around the hall, to prevent any possible disturbance, and sentries sharply ordered loiterers to move on. Nakovschenko and his colleagues entered, and the entire assembly stood. He read the judgement. When he came to the decisive part, condemning the Archbishop and nine others to death, a roar of triumph and hatred burst from the crowd. As it died down the sobs of two women could be heard. They were relatives of the prisoners. Fifty-three were given long terms of imprisonment. The prisoners made the sign of the cross. The trial was over.

Later it was decided to shoot only four—the Archbishop, Shein, and two lawyers, Novitsky and Kovaharov.

On the day after the trial the churches of Petrograd were unusually full of women, praying and weeping. I noted them kneeling upon the cold, damp stones of St. Isaac's Cathedral. Fronting them shone St. Isaac's wonderful windowed picture of Christ, with scarlet robe, bared breast, wounded hands and pierced, naked feet. He seemed to be looking pitifully down on them.

"Seemed," did I say?

CHAPTER XIII

IN FULL FLOOD

THE year 1922 saw the campaign against religion in full flood. The authorities were satisfied now that they need not fear any general trouble because of the persecution of religion. There might be sporadic disturbances, but these could be easily suppressed. A department under the Commissariat of Justice was established for the control of religion, a department that might well have been regarded as the anti-religious Holy Synod. It was assisted by a special section of the G.P.U.

This department carried out its work very cleverly. The first aim was to weaken and break the unity of the Orthodox Greek Church. To accomplish this, various means were used. One was to encourage, for the time, the various dissenting bodies which had been harshly treated under Czarism, and to foster a division in the Church itself, by a group of reforming priests known as the "Living Church". These were gathered together and were taken to see Tikhon in prison, where they attacked him as a shedder of blood and a faithless leader of the Church, and demanded that he should hand over his powers to others.

The popular head of the new movement was Vvedensky, the Petrograd incumbent already mentioned, who had made a high reputation by his eloquence and daring. In the last days of Czarism, he had preached reform and had nearly been sent to prison.

I met Vvedensky and had an opportunity to discuss fully with him, in his home, the new movement and what it meant. He painted the reformed Church that was to be as the "Living Church in name and in deed" in the most attractive colours. He is a magnetic character, carrying many of the gifts of the popular orator into private life. He is still young, handsome, tall, and strong-featured, and one could understand how he attracted people of all classes to his Church.

The Living Church as Vvedensky saw it had two sides, the one ecclesiastical and the other human. On the ecclesiastical side, he asked first that bishops should be chosen from the regular clergy and not exclusively from the monks, as had been the custom; services should be held in the common Russian tongue and not in old Slavonic, which few understood. There should be greater freedom in the introduction of liturgies and in forms of service. Vvedensky did not expect the Church to be part of the Government, or under the Government, and recognized that a Soviet Church was simply unthinkable. "We aim to bring Christianity back to the life of the first three centuries," he said. "Jesus Christ himself was a Socialist. The members of the first Church had all in common.

"We would destroy the atmosphere of payment and profit that has for so long surrounded so many of the services of the Church and not make the rites of religion instruments of personal gain. Religion has deadened and our faith has frozen up under the influence of set rules. We would make the Church no longer mechanical and inert, but living, growing, free. The Church that ceases to grow in ideas, in ways, that ceases to adapt itself to the spirit of the age, becomes stagnant and dies.

"In place of the negative Christianity that so many have cultivated, joyless, patient and silent, we would have joyous, creative faith, taking new forms, finding fresh revelations. We would have our services not the lifeless repetitions of the gramophone, but a living act of faith connecting us with God."

He made no secret of his Socialism and no secret either of his belief that the Church and Government should work in harmony. "We would be in accord with the Government, but not of it."

Yevdokin, then Archbishop of Nizhni-Novgorod, was a man of stronger calibre than Vvedensky. He was a great liberal Churchman whose outspokenness when he was holding high office in Moscow in Czarist days had brought such trouble on him that he had been transferred to New York as head of the Orthodox Greek Church there. Returning to Russia after the outbreak of the Revolution, he became Archbishop of Nizhni-Novgorod, established good relations with the Government, and kept his bishops out of prison.

While the G.P.U. was using the priests of the "Living

Church" to attack the Patriarch, the general anti-religious campaign was fostered in many ways. One of the most spectacular was the arrest and trial of Archbishop Czepliak and sixteen Catholic clergymen of Petrograd, on a charge of counter-revolution, and particularly of opposing the law for the expropriation of surplus church treasures for famine relief. The hollowness of the latter part of this charge may be shown by the fact that the Pope had directly approached the Russian authorities and offered to pay them the value of any articles used in religious worship which they proposed to seize. To this offer the Soviet Government made no response.

The trial was held in a room in the Union House, formerly the Nobles' Club in Moscow. The scene in the court was one of great simplicity. The venerable, white-haired Archbishop, distinguished by his red cap, sat in the centre of the front row of the prisoners, supported on either side by two of his leading subordinates. Beyond them were three rows of typically Catholic priests, still in clerical garments. Some were grey-haired and spectacled, and all looked careworn and somewhat shabby. Around them were khaki-coated and blue-helmeted soldiers with fixed bayonets. In the audience were many sad-eyed women, evidently faithful Catholics, who sat silent, with sorrow marked in their drooping shoulders. Many of the men present were dressed in mourning.

The authorities had already closed the Catholic churches in Petrograd because of the refusal of the congregations to sign agreements recognizing State ownership of church property and pledging the congregations to hold it safely in trust for the Government. One of the main charges against Archbishop Czepliak was that he had forbidden his clergy to sign such contracts, or to fulfil them if signed.

But the main charges, reiterated by the Government Prosecutor, M. Krylenko, were two: that the Catholic priests placed canon law above State law and that they had engaged in the religious instruction of young people under the age of 18. The Archbishop and the other priests did their utmost, under cross-examination, to explain the difference between canonical obedience imposed on them as Churchmen and obedience to the State. They made no secret of the fact, many of them, that they had instructed young people in religion and frankly declared that their faith commanded

them to do it. Witnesses told how, when they had gone to their churches to close them, they had found the churches full of worshippers, the priests in their place, and the members of the congregation kneeling, and how, when the people were ordered to go, they started singing hymns and all had to be led out one by one.

There was a touching scene at the close of the first day of the trial. The women whom I had noticed sitting in the audience suddenly pressed forward and stretched out gifts for the prisoners, honey and bread and bottles of milk. Next day, much evidence was given about the attitude of the Roman Church towards the Soviet State. Cardinal Rappe, who preceded Archbishop Czepliak, had counselled obedience to the Soviet Government, arguing according to the prosecution that it could not endure and that, therefore, it was better to live through its rule with the least friction possible. "We must try to waste as little as we can of our moral and material forces and arrange our affairs so as to be able to pass through this temporary difficulty."

Archbishop Czepliak said he was convinced that the Soviet Government would endure and he was anxious to make a compromise in adjusting the relations of his Church to it. "But we shall not allow the profanation of an object of faith," he had written before the trial. "We are not masters of this property and we must maintain our rights. All these Church treasures have been bought with the money of believers. The Russian Government never gave anything to the Catholic Church. How can it consider that the Church treasures are Government property?"

The Archbishop, it was urged, had appealed to Churchmen to work to restore religious education. Letters of his were produced in which he told the Catholics to ask and demand permission to teach religion to their children. A witness related how, when the officials went to one of the Petrograd churches and attempted to approach the altar, a priest now among the prisoners, Khodnovitch, barred the way. "You will not touch the sacred elements except over my dead body," he declared. The officials retorted that he might have valuable objects concealed within the host. He pledged his honour as a priest that nothing but sacred elements were there. Then the officials started quarrelling among themselves as to whether they should insist on the examination or not. The priest and a group of worshippers fell on their

knees to pray and the intruders turned away and left them alone.

There were days during the trial when one might have thought that a debate was proceeding. In their final speeches the prisoners denied that they had any revolutionary aims. "I speak as a man on the eve of his death," said the Archbishop. "This alone, not to mention my age or my position, must force you to believe what I say. We have never been members of any counter-revolutionary organization and we never attacked the Soviet power. We acted not against, but for, the Russian Government, and we stand as representatives of a supreme truth that has been followed by the greatest minds for 3,000 years and always led towards a height of goodness and gentleness."

During the trial, Krylenko had examined the prisoners in soft courteous fashion, but when it came to his final speech, he threw off his mild manner and demanded that the death sentence be passed on four of them—the Archbishop, Budkiewich, Dean of the Church of Petrograd, and two priests.

"It is not for laughing and joking that I have come here," Krylenko declared. "I speak calmly and firmly. We must make the Catholic organization powerless. We are not bloodthirsty. I ask imprisonment for the others. But these four provoked resistance to the law. The Church must be put in a position where it cannot interfere with the political life of the country."

Archbishop Czepliak, the Prosecutor continued, had urged the Catholic clergy not to accept and not to obey a proposed agreement for the administration of the Church drawn up by the Soviet authorities, under which they agreed that their churches were the property of the State, and had written an episcopal letter urging the members of the Church to work for the repeal of the law prohibiting group teaching of religion to persons under 18 years of age.

Budkiewich, a member of the old noble German family, had written two letters in 1918 and 1919 to the Polish authorities while Poland and Russia were at war, asking in the second letter for money for the Church, saying that it would soon be repaid, as the Soviet Government would not last long.

Khvezko, a straight-eyed, simple-looking young priest, had, even during the trial, openly refused to obey the laws

that were against his conscience. He had given up all the Church treasures, but when asked if he had taught religion to children he had replied that he had. This was true.

"Did you know it was forbidden?" Krylenko asked.

"Yes," replied the priest. "I had heard so."

"Then why did you do it?" the Prosecutor asked.

"I did it," replied Khvezko, "because the principles of my Church required me to. I have done it, and I shall do it again. I am from a simple peasant family, and I am very strong in my faith."

One priest for whom Krylenko asked the maximum imprisonment was Feodorov Exar. His story as he told it in court moved all the audience. Sent into exile by the Czarist régime, he returned to Russia during the War to fight for his Fatherland. He was immediately sent by the Czar's Government to Siberia. Kerensky's revolution released him and he worked for the co-ordination of the Church and for a plan to separate the Church and State. Krylenko described him as a fanatic of exceptional ability and of strong convictions. And he looked it.

Krylenko's demand for death sentences electrified the audience. The crowd gave a gasp, and the people leaned forward waiting for the next word, as though their ears had deceived them. The prisoners were momentarily stunned. The Archbishop's ears reddened, but he sat unmoved. Budkiewich, a silver-haired priest of 65 years, with a cherubic face, flushed and wiped his forehead with a handkerchief. One wept quietly and openly like a child. Another turned his eyes away and put his hands together as if in prayer. Still other priests furtively brushed their eyes.

Krylenko denounced especially the Catholic religious education of the young.

"Religion," he said, "is the strong chain by which the Church binds youth to it. That is why, in the interest of thought, conscience and logic, we forbid religious teaching to persons under 18 years of age. The accused confess that they continued religious teaching until within a week before their arrest. This alone is enough to convict them."

There came a long wait for the sentences. "Are you not hungry?" I asked one woman. "When the heart is heavy one wants no food," she replied. A large part of the audience was openly and bitterly against the priests. Soon after midnight, the judges returned and quickly read their sentences.

Csepliak and Budkiewich were sentenced to death. Five priests were each sentenced to ten years' imprisonment, and the others, except a choir-boy, who was released, received three years apiece. The Archbishop, upon hearing his sentence, made the sign of the Cross. Budkiewich sat rigid. One woman in the audience fainted, another burst into tears, and a man fell on the floor as though in a fit. A number of troops had already taken their place in the hall before the sentences were read and elaborate precautions had been taken to prevent any sympathizers with the prisoners making an attempt on the judges. Barely had the sentences been passed before Krylenko turned to a number of troops standing waiting. "Out!" he said, and they quickly proceeded to clear the hall.

The news of the sentences caused deep sensation throughout the world. Protests poured in on Moscow, British Socialist leaders such as Mr. Lansbury joining in them. Lenin himself, lying ill in the Kremlin, was surprised. "You are not going to kill them?" he asked Kamenev, then the working head of the Government. Kamenev assured him that they were not. Those who were in Moscow at the time believed that the Government would not have done so, except for the violent nature of the Polish protest. Budkiewich was shot secretly in the usual Communist fashion—the Archbishop's sentence was reduced to ten years' solitary imprisonment.

CHAPTER XIV

THE PEOPLE REJECT THE LIVING CHURCH

THE arrest of the clergy was followed by the seizure of numerous churches on the most varied excuses and at times on no excuse at all. Some were wanted for local museums, some as Communist clubs. The Church of St. Pimen in Moscow, a very fine building, was taken on the excuse that the janitor had illegally distilled spirits in the belfry. Thereupon the Church was handed over to the Communist party, the golden crosses were taken from its dome and red flags put up. A monstrous bust of Karl Marx occupied the central place at the altar and all over the building were placed cartoons and mottoes holding up religion and Christ to scorn and ridicule as the friends and aiders of the enemies of the people. A club of Young Communists made this Church their centre and gave many anti-religious demonstrations on a platform erected in front of the altar.

The only thing that prevented the greater seizure of churches at the time was the difficulty found in making any use of them. Church buildings are usually inconvenient for any but church purposes. They are costly to keep warm and need re-seating to be suitable for concert halls.

Christmas, 1922, was marked by a number of anti-religious demonstrations throughout the country. The demonstration in Moscow, which I witnessed, was typical of most of the others. It was prepared by students of the Sverdloff University—the College of Communism—and it would be difficult to imagine anything of a more offensive and odious character. All religions were guyed, and Buddha and Mahommed were hideously caricatured, but the chief abuse fell on the sacred figures of the Christian religion. God, Christ and the Virgin Mary were depicted by characters so foul that I refuse to describe them. Some students were disguised as priests and rabbis, chanting parodies of the Church Service.

Everything that could be devised by malignant minds

to wound the hearts of Christian people was presented that day. The lads and girls marched along, shouting and singing, drunk with excitement and, in some cases, also drunk with too much liquor. Finally, they gathered around an open space where they burnt the effigies in a great bonfire, dancing around the flames. The absence of people in the streets was noticeable. Most decent folk kept indoors and the churches and synagogues were crowded that Christmas as they had not been for a long time.

It began to dawn on the authorities that probably they were going too far. The first sign of this was an intimation from the chief offices of the Russian Communist party to the branches that the Easter celebrations must be in a more decorous tone. The violent protests from all the world against the execution of Budkiewich also had its effect, and the trial of the Patriarch which had been announced with all the usual *réclame* was delayed and delayed.

Meanwhile, the leaders of the Living Church were active. Working under official authority, they summoned a Council of delegates chosen from all over the country. Each Church elected its delegates to a diocesan conference and the diocesan conference elected its delegates to the Church Council. There was very great trickery used to see that delegates should be chosen who were amenable. Large numbers of Churchmen likely to prove obstinate were arrested. In the Diocese of Moscow, where nine-tenths of the priests had bound themselves to resist the Living Church, they were easily outplayed by Krasnitsky, who constituted himself Chairman of the Assembly. When the protesting priests refused to yield, he adjourned the meeting. At the next gathering he expelled all who would not accept the new church, on the plea that they were disorderly. Then, with his small minority left, he proceeded to elect the delegates.

The All-Russian Church Congress met with delegates chosen in this fashion. It was well-known, before the Congress began, that the Living Church had secured a sufficient majority. An elaborate programme was prepared ahead. The Patriarch Tikhon was to be degraded and the patriarchate abolished. An administrative body was to be formed of an executive Church Council, which should control everything. The Soviet Government was to be openly accepted and the accord between Communism and primitive Christianity proclaimed.

In addition to Vvedensky and Yevdokin, two other leaders were now playing a prominent part. One was Archbishop Antonin, a man of great physical strength and mental audacity, who had long been noted for his liberal opinions. When holding an ecclesiastical post in Petrograd in 1905, he refused to say liturgical prayers for the Czar, was deprived of his office and sent into exile, where he remained until 1914, when he was made Archbishop of Vladikakaz. Not much was heard of him until 1922, when he openly defended the Government's scheme to appropriate church treasures for famine relief. When Tikhon was imprisoned, he was summoned to Moscow to preside over the Church there. Krasnitsky, an ecclesiastical politician of very violent type, had long been known as a red priest of the most violent kind and was even credited with having fought in the Red army.

Vvedensky himself was evidently feeling that the Living Church had become too material, for he had started an Apostolic Association of old Christian Communists, a body emphasizing the importance of life, of work and of prayer, advocating Christian Communism and declaring that Christians should hold all things in common as in the primitive Church.

The movement against Tikhon was now being blown into a white heat. In many country districts the priests were given the choice by the police between joining the Living Church or going to prison. Most refused to join, but there were quite enough who passed violently worded resolutions demanding punishment for Tikhon, which were printed with great glee by the Communist papers. These were men who laid themselves open to the charge of being the meanest and poorest spirited of deserters.

The scene when Tikhon was condemned was of great dramatic interest. The Church Council was held, not in any cathedral, but in a theatre. The gaily painted flies in the wings had been swept aside and a brown curtain hung from the rear as a background. The prompter's hood had been taken from the front of the stage, an Ikon of the thorned head of Christ hung from the top of the proscenium and a pair of sacred pictures was fastened inconspicuously on either side.

The whole proceedings were stage-managed with consummate skill. Tikhon, absent and in prison, could utter no word in his own defence. He was condemned unheard.

Upon the stage, illuminated by a fierce headlight, sat the leaders of the reform movement. Close to Archbishop Antonin was Petr, Metropolitan Archbishop of Siberia, whom I had met not long before in the little log hut at Tomsk which was his home. In the front row of the body of the hall sat a number of Archbishops, Nicolai of Saratof, whose venerable face and silver white hair proclaimed his 80 odd years, Vaitoney of Tula, Johan of Jaroslav and many another. They were in their full robes, their heads decked with "klobuks", high peculiarly shaped hats, wearing fine jewelled breast decorations and robes of white and gold. Behind them sat crowded ranks of priests and lay delegates, the priests mostly with very long hair and long beards.

The central figure of the whole assembly was Vvedensky, on whom fell the task of presenting the case against Tikhon. Dressed plainly in a long black gown, decked solely by a stone cross hanging from his breast, he held the gathering spell-bound for three hours, delivering a speech of amazingly persuasive eloquence. Starting quietly, with a persuasive, almost effeminate voice, his tones ran the gamut from a whisper to a trumpet call. He pleaded, ridiculed, implored, commanded. His speech was an indictment of the old Church, a defence of Communism on spiritual grounds and an attack on the Patriarch. He denounced capitalism, declaring that Rockefeller, not Christ, was the leader of modern Christianity, pleaded for Christian Socialism and indicted the old Church as the corrupt and enslaved instrument of Czarism. "Choose between Tikhon and Christ," Vvedensky thundered. "The spirit of life in the Church is stronger than Tikhon's canons. The spirit speaks and Christ lives again." Krasnitsky supported Tikhon's condemnation and Archbishop Antonin, who presided, announced that the Council of Archbishops had on the previous day agreed to Tikhon's degradation. "The Council sees in the Soviet power the friend of the people," said he. "The Church must take the right way. It has been counter-revolutionary, and has pronounced anathema against the Soviet power, an anathema which we regret and withdraw."

At the close of his speech, Antonin demanded a vote. Several wanted to be heard, but he ignored them. The vote was taken openly. All but six out of that great assembly supported the resolution for Tikhon's degradation. Five refrained from voting and one young man—I noted

him with admiration for his courage—voted in the negative. "Patriarch Tikhon has betrayed Christ and betrayed the Church," ran the decree of the Council. "Following Church law, we proclaim Tikhon to be deprived of the patriarchate and of monkhood, reverting to the status of a simple private citizen. From now on, Patriarch Tikhon is Citizen Vasily Beliavin."

I followed the proceedings of this Council day by day with great interest. Its origin was so doubtful, its election was surrounded with intrigue and shameless manipulation, and its background so darkened by the imprisonment of the numerous priests that one found it difficult to regard it impartially. Yet the reforms that the Council proposed and carried were many of them of a kind that appealed to the Western spectator. The Western calendar was to be adopted, symbolical of the opening of the Eastern Church to Western ideas. The abolition of town monasteries and the conversion of country monasteries into working institutions, was justified by the vast abuses which had crept up around Russian monasticism. There was much to be said for the abolition of the prohibition of the re-marriage of priests, for this prohibition had notoriously led to much immorality. The limitation of the choice of bishops to monks which hitherto prevailed had hardened and dehumanized the high Church organization. Priests might now re-marry and ordinary priests rise to the highest office. The reformers tried to sweep away all relics, but their aim here caused such heart-burning that they were obliged to stay their hand.

The crowning scene at the Council was the election of Vvedensky as Archbishop of Moscow. His naming ceremony was a strong mixture of pomp and simplicity. As though to herald abroad the arrival of a new religious era, in which the church regards no place as especially sacred, but by its work sanctifies all, the ceremony of naming was also held in the theatre, and priests, bishops and archbishops crowded the auditorium.

The stage had been cleared and a temporary altar arranged in the background. Three simple seats served as throne for the three Metropolitans, Antonin of Moscow, Petr of Siberia and Tikhon of Kiev. Their acolytes brought splendid robes which they put on in full view. Their robes were of cloth of gold with neckbands. Then the Metro-

politans assumed their snow-white mitres fronted with gold crosses and sat with sumptuously clad archpriests on either side, making a picture which for gorgeous colouring Henry Irving at his prime in stage-craft never approached.

Vvedensky was led out in a simple black robe and returned crowned with a magnificent golden mitre and wearing an ornate scarlet gold robe. Two golden-robed archpriests followed.

Vvedensky humbly approached the Metropolitans, bowing and kissing their hands. After bowing low to all, he made his confession of faith. Pale and heavy with fatigue, he started quietly, with his eyes shut and his hands clasped. Gradually animation returned and he related with quiet eloquence his story of a spiritual struggle which might well have been told on a Salvationist platform or in a classroom.

He related his soul conflict when a young student, his efforts to put religion from him and his final yielding to God and the coming of spiritual peace. He told of his championship of the poor. When a priest, his first sermon was on the rich and the poor, and it brought him a rebuke. He stood against Czarism's using the Church for autocracy.

As he talked one felt that he was laying his soul bare. Then came a sketch of the Church to-morrow with bishops, not as despots, but men of love.

After Vvedensky had been anointed with holy water the whole priestly congregation rose, while a moving chorus was sung with a triumphant lilt. "Christ is risen from the dead, to the dead he has given life."

At a later meeting of the Council to my amazement a young priest came up to me and told me that the Archbishop presiding desired that I should address the assembly. I hastily refused, but my refusal was too late, for already the Archbishop was on his feet asking the bishops if they did not wish to hear me, a question to which they were bound in politeness to assent with some cordiality. When the applause died away, the Archbishop announced that as it was late, they would wait till the next day before they heard me.

I went back to my rooms that evening a very much worried man. Here was an opportunity to tell the reforming Churchmen what I thought. How could I word what I had to say in such a way as to appeal to them and how could I say what ought to be said without offending the Soviet authorities?

A little reflection showed me that whatever I might say, if it was to be worth saying at all, was bound to cause political offence, so I spent an hour in putting my papers in order, ready for a forced departure next day, and then proceeded to prepare my address.

I have only the first page of it among my papers. Here it is :—

"HOLY FATHERS, BROTHERS.

"I COME TO-DAY WITH JOYFUL GREETINGS, AND WITH GOOD WILL TO RUSSIA.

"I come with congratulations, not commiseration.

"You have lost much, but God through the Revolution has made you free.

"You have lost your chains, the chains of wealth, privilege and power.

"When I visit Archbishop Petr in his log hut in Novo-Nikolaievsk or Archbishop Vvedensky in his small apartment over a drug store in Moscow, I feel that here is more fitting home than palaces for men who represent CHRISTOS PROLETAR, CHRISTOS PLOTNIK (Christ the worker, Christ the carpenter).

"I congratulate you because travelling all over Russia as I do I see the beginnings of a great movement towards God.

"Men are tiring of arid atheism and cheap philosophy. It is for you to help to keep religion from politics and never let faith be made the hand-maiden of reaction.

"To you has been given the crowning task of our age, to re-interpret Christ to our new age, Christos Proletar.

"On every bookstall in Russia I find papers picturing Christ as the parasite, a feeble monkish figure bolstering up corruption and cruelty.

"ETO LOSH, ETO LOSH, ETO LOSH.
(It's false! It's false! It's false!)

"Our hearts know Christ as the poor man who loved the poor; pearls and gold and medieval traditions once blurred our true vision. The pearls and gold decking his pictures have gone to feed the hungry, as he would have wished."

I proceeded to urge on the Churchmen a plan of definite activity. Let them fight for permission to establish a weekly paper as well printed and as cleverly edited as *Bezboznik* (*The Atheist*), which should be circulated by the Church

throughout the country. Let them get up preaching campaigns, ask for the right to teach their children, and so on.

Now for the anti-climax. The political police had their men in that Council, and when word was taken back to Loubyanka that the Archbishop had invited me to speak, orders were evidently given that this must not be allowed. So next morning when I entered the Council, keyed up for what might follow, the Archbishop did not even see me. He gazed over my head as though I were not there and, at the first pause after my entry, announced that they would have no more speeches, but would proceed to routine business.

CHAPTER XV

THE MAIN ATTACK

THE revived campaign of religious suppression in 1929 was part of a general advance within the Communist Party. When Lenin fell ill, many expected that the leadership would pass to Trotsky, who had been only second to him in shaping the Revolution.

But this was not to be. A strong group of older Bolshevists regarded Trotsky as an upstart adventurer. He had only joined their party in 1917, although he had, of course, been a leading Socialist worker for many years before. His gifts, his magnetic personality, and his air of self-conscious superiority angered them; they feared lest, as chief of the Army, he should use his power to make himself dictator; and they began to undermine him.

At the head of Trotsky's enemies was Josef Stalin, Secretary of the Russian Communist Party, and the master of political organization. Stalin had proved his qualities as Commissioner for Outer Nationalities and was feared within the party, although then little heard of without. By the skilled use of the political machine, Stalin succeeded in overthrowing Trotsky, disciplining him and his friends.

But there was considerable unrest within the Russian Communist ranks, which the disgrace and subsequent exile of Trotsky and a number of his leading supporters did not wholly allay. Stalin seemed at first inclined towards a moderate policy, and thereupon was attacked by Trotsky as the enemy of Communism. Trotsky declared that Stalin's policy, resting upon the upbuilding of a class of prosperous peasants, owning (in effect) their land and accumulating property, meant the wreck of their ideals. The peasants, being notoriously anti-Communist, would in time, in conjunction with private traders in towns, be strong enough to demand political rights and would gradually overwhelm the Communists.

Stalin fought and broke Trotsky, but was obliged to accept

Trotsky's views. He initiated a new plan, a reversion to the earlier programmes of the Party, and proceeded to carry it out with the wealth of organization and with efficient machinery, such as the Communists earlier lacked.

The main items of the new Stalin programme were :—

(1) The re-elimination of private trade.
(2) A gigantic scheme of industrial expansion known as the Five Years' Plan, five years being the time estimated as necessary to complete it.
(3) The rapid extinction of independent peasant farming. Stalin regarded the individual peasant farmer as economically wasteful and politically dangerous, and planned to force him into vast State or smaller communal farms.
(4) The suppression of outward religion within five years.

The new policy has many severe critics within the Party itself. Stalin overwhelms them. Strong, tempestuous, hard, he overcomes his opponents by the most drastic methods. "I will tear your theatre down brick by brick," he told the Director of the Moscow Art Theatre, who had offended him over some minor matter. "I will strip you and your actors, and exhibit you naked in every city in Russia." Once Stalin makes up his mind on a course, all in his way may well take care.

One of the first steps in the destruction of religion was the promulgation of a decree of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee and the Council of People's Commissars respecting religious associations (8th April, 1929). This law was a continuation of the law of 23rd January, 1918, described in an earlier chapter. It consolidated and restated various decrees and rulings, and added to them.

Here are some of the restrictions it imposed.

Each religious society must be registered, and a person can only belong to one society. (A member of a Church must therefore not be a member of the Y.M.C.A., or Christian Students' Union. This matters less, because such organizations have been suppressed.)

General meetings of religious societies or groups of believers can only be held if special permission is obtained.

Religious societies may only use one building for worship.

Ministers of religion can only work in the area where

their church is situated, and the churches must not invite or permit preachers from the outside to address them.

Churches may not

(*a*) Create mutual credit societies, co-operative or commercial undertakings, or in general use the property at their disposal for other than religious purposes.

(*b*) Give material assistance to their members. (They were already forbidden to indulge in outside charity.)

(*c*) Hold special prayer or other meetings for women, children, or adolescents. Have group meetings, circles, or departments for the study of the Bible, or of literature, for sewing, working, or the teaching of religion. They are also forbidden to organize excursions, open playgrounds for children, have public libraries or reading-rooms, or to organize sanatoria or to make provision for medical assistance.

Central gatherings of churches, e.g., diocesan gatherings, can only be held if special permission is granted. Central organizations are forbidden, among other things, to establish any kind of central fund for the collection of voluntary gifts from the members.

All church property necessary for the observance of a cult is nationalized and is administered by the local authorities for the use of the believers.

No religious service may take place in any State, public, co-operative, or private institution, and no religious objects may be placed in such institutions. (Dying people or people seriously ill in prison or hospital are, however, allowed a relaxation of this rule.)

Religious processions and services in the open air are prohibited, unless special permission is obtained. (This does not apply to processions around the Churches, such as take place in the Orthodox Churches at Easter.)

This decree of 8th April, 1929, is in effect a modernized form of the decree of the Empress Anne in 1835. The Empress decreed that dissenters might worship as they pleased, but must not seek to make converts, under heavy penalties. The Soviet extends this regulation to all religions.

The summer and autumn of 1929 witnessed a steady growth of Communist aggression. The annual Congress of the Russian Communist Party marked another stage in the anti-religious advance. Everything short of the actual closing of the churches seemed now to have been done, but here the ingenuity of the Party in power proved not yet to be exhausted. The Government decreed a five-day week in place of the seven-day week, in order to break completely the observance of Sunday. Each person is now to have one day off in five, but since the day varies according to each person's work, different members of a family often have their periodical rest on different days. There came a campaign of the confiscation of church bells, nominally in order that their metal might be used for industrial purposes, but really to stop the call of religion. The workers were given the power to initiate proceedings to close churches and in large sections of the country they launched campaigns to stop by force every place of worship there. All this, of course, was carried out under the influence and direction of Moscow.

The efforts of the authorities to suppress by force the so-called kulaki, the more prosperous peasants, by seizing their farms and expelling them from their districts, went hand-in-hand with the seizure of the churches. The economic regulations were specially used to penalize the priests. From all over the country accounts began to arrive of the arrests of priests, because they had not produced the quantity of grain required, or had not been able to meet high taxes.

The campaign against the kulaki seemed to most outside observers economic madness, for they are the producers of foodstuffs on which the nation depends for its life. By the early winter of 1929, Moscow and other cities were suffering from acute lack of food. In Moscow the food queues in which people stood who were fortunate enough to have ration cards were a conspicuous part of everyday life. The eighty thousand people who, for one reason or another, had no ration cards, being in a state of life disapproved by the authorities, had a very bad time indeed. This eighty thousand included all the priests and ministers of religion in the city. There were whispers that these might all be expelled, because all available house room in the city was needed for the workers. Tales poured in from the country of the sullen anger of the peasantry against the new laws, of kulaki killing their cattle, and destroying their property, rather than let

the State seize them. Then it was that Stalin spoke again, this time, strangely enough for Stalin, in softer voice. He sent out a long message ordering his followers to modify their zeal in using compulsory measures against kulaki and Churchmen.

What will be the effect of this? It is too early to say, but as I write, word comes of the beginning of a remarkable change for the better.

The main attack against religion, that was to have swept it from the land, is faltering.

CHAPTER XVI

JEW AND GENTILE

THE plea of the Bolshevists that they arrest and imprison religious people because of their political activity and not because of their religion might have some excuse if they had only proceeded against the members of the Orthodox Greek Church. But in addition they have carried on a campaign against religious organizations whose harsh treatment under Czarism made them the very last to desire to engage in anti-revolutionary activity.

The two most conspicuous examples are the Jews and the Baptists. The history of the persecution of the Jews in Czarist days is one of the very black pages of Russian history. For generations the Orthodox Christian was taught to hate the Jew. The feeling lingers even to-day. "Wait till we get our chance," say the old Russians grimly, "we will kill the Jews. There will be such a pogrom right through Russia that you will forget that there has ever been a pogrom before."

And they mean it! The Jew was never liked, and to-day a section of the Communists and a large proportion of the non-Communists hate him with a virulence difficult to describe. The blame for most of the suffering brought about by the revolution is put on his shoulders. The fact that leaders like Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev, and Litvinov are Jews is emphasized time and again.

How far is the charge that the Communist Revolution was the work of the Jews true?

Lenin was not a Jew. The strongest man in the Government to-day, Josef Stalin, is a Georgian. Kalinin, President of the Republic, is a Russian peasant, and Rykov, a foremost figure in the administration, is also a pure Russian. Dzjerzhinsky, father of the political police, was of Polish descent. Chicherin, Commissar for Foreign Affairs, is of an old Russian noble family. Krylenko, Public Procurator,

and Shimashko, Commissar of Health, are neither of them Jews. I estimated in 1924 that, out of the leaders of the movement, only one in three was a Jew.

But a number of Jews, many of them trained in America, stepped into high official positions. The Foreign Office, although its chiefs are of Christian descent, is still largely staffed by Jews. Various Commissariats long seemed like a New Jerusalem until reaction within the ranks of the Communist Party caused many of the Jewish officials to be ejected.

The Jew had, at first, every reason to support the Communists against the Whites. For generations he had been shut out from all public life. In Czarist days, Jews could not settle in Moscow unless they belonged to certain privileged classes. By the code of 1835, the Children of Israel were confined for permanent residence to certain districts known as the "Pale".

Exceptions were made in favour of merchants of the first class, professional men and women and master artisans. These, the members of their families and their personal servants could live where they pleased. The Jew, oppressed, despised and plundered, developed the defences of weakness, cunning among them. Every country has the Jews it deserves.

When visiting the Ukraine, I saw something of the Jewish question as it is revealed in rural Russia. The western Ukraine contained parts of the old "Pale". Here are great cities with 30, 40 and 50 per cent. of the population Jews. There are village communities entirely Jewish, and large agricultural colonies—Nikolaivska, Khersonskovska, and Eikateroslovska —built up from the inhospitable and unfertile desert soil by Jewish industry. The Jew, even here, does not make a good farmer, but he has shown that he can at least earn his living from the land.

When the revolution of 1917 was followed by the wars between the Whites and the Reds in the Ukraine, the White armies promptly proceeded to punish the Jew.

"The pogroms of 1919-20 were more terrible than anything we knew in 1905," said Mr. Ebstein of the Yrupskcom. "Petlura, the rebel White leader, slew Jewish communities wholesale, wiping out entire villages. Denikin's officers specialized not so much in killing as in violating Jewish women. In Drobnobsky seventy-five Jews were buried alive. I have talked with the men who saw the thing done."

Macknaw, the anarchist schoolmaster, who fought now with the Whites and now with the Reds, and for months at a time ruled a large part of South Russia, was never backward in killing Jews. In Elizabethgrad alone, while he held power there, 3,000 people were killed in the last three days of May in 1919. In the region around Kiev half a million Jews suffered during the uprisings. Of these 200,000 were killed and 180,000 children were left orphans, more than half of these losing both parents.

"The massacres of the Jews of Southern Russia during the years 1919 and 1920," wrote Sir Horace Rumbold, then His Majesty's Minister at Warsaw, "can find for thoroughness and extent no parallel except in the massacres of the Armenians."

In the famous Jewish agricultural colonies, where at the beginning of the Revolution there were 150,000 settlers, there were, after the fighting, only 60,000, the rest having been killed or fled.

The Bolshevists set out to protect the Jews and gave Jewish villagers arms to enable them to defend themselves, in many cases disarming their Christian neighbours.

By raising money among themselves and through gifts from the great Jewish organizations in America and Europe, such as the All-Russian Jewish Publicity Committee, the Jews in Kiev maintained homes where 35,000 children, left orphans by the pogroms, were being trained.

Does any man in his senses imagine that the religious Jews who had suffered so much from Czarism and from the White Armies would plot to overthrow Bolshevism? Yet it is on these Jews that the Bolshevists have inflicted some of their severest persecution.

One of the first disputes with the authorities came over the question of religious instruction in orphanages for destitute children. The Communists decreed that there must be no religious teaching in these establishments. The use of Yiddish was allowed, but Hebrew was taboo. Nevertheless, attempts were made in the schools to preserve separate Jewish life, Jewish customs and racial instincts, apart from religion. The treasures of the Jewish synagogues were seized for famine relief, like those of the Christian churches. The Jews did not hesitate to declare that it was their fellow Jews turned from religion who had become their bitterest foes. It was the apostates, they said,

who denounced them and who urged the authorities to imprison them for the crime of teaching Hebrew, or for entertaining the hope of the coming again of the Jewish state.

"Why do you make the class teaching of Hebrew illegal, while you permit and encourage Yiddish?" I asked one prominent Bolshevist, himself a Jew. "Why do you regard Zionism as a crime?"

"Zionism," he replied, "is a political creed, which aims at the building up of a bourgeois state. We cannot allow that. Hebrew represents reaction and an evil tradition."

The Jews have resisted with special stubbornness the attempt of the authorities to prohibit the instruction of their children in Talmudic lore, and this was going on in secret defiance of all decrees. I asked one veteran rabbi if he thought that the Bolshevist campaign would do religious Judaism any harm. "For two thousand years," he said quietly, "we have been persecuted. The real danger to our faith is not persecution, but too much prosperity. When that comes, some of our people are apt to forget their God. But persecution draws us closer together and strengthens us."

In the exile camps I found both Rabbis and Young Zionists.

From then till now the persecution of the religious Jews has gone on steadily. This was clearly shown in a speech of Dr. Hertz, the Chief Rabbi, in London in December, 1929:

"The confiscation of Synagogues on the part of the local Soviets continues throughout Russia. By unblushing defiance of immemorial right, houses of worship are taken from the congregations and turned into Communist clubs and workmen's dwellings. As late as 26th September, 1929, only a few days before the Jewish High Festivals, five synagogues were confiscated in the city of Homel alone. The worshippers were happy if they could find barns and stables in which to arrange services on those, the most solemn days of the Jewish year. This confiscation of synagogues is accompanied by every conceivable molestation of religious life. The burial-grounds, for example, have been taken away from the communities and placed under Soviet control. The Rabbis, as are the Priests of other denominations, are subjected to all

sorts of indignities, on the plea of their being counter-revolutionaries at heart; and Zionists were hounded with inhuman ferocity, on the plea that every Zionist is 'an agent of British Imperialism'. They are imprisoned or exiled to distant parts of the White Sea and Siberia; and many a one has been driven to suicide or insanity by sufferings that pass the point of human endurance.

"Immeasurably more deadly to the cause of religion, however, than the closing of houses of worship or the degradation of Priests or Rabbis is the proscription of religious teaching to the young. The Soviet Commissars forbid all class instruction in religion, even after school hours, even outside the school premises; nay, even in the homes of the children. In many provinces of Russia, the Commissars have declared that even two children constitute a 'class', subjecting their teacher to the dire penalties for imparting instruction in religion or Bible to children at school. Now, Russia is Russia, and no law in that country has ever been carried out consistently or impartially. Slight concessions in the matter of religious teaching are, it is said, made for Mohammedans and for one or two of the minor Christian denominations. No concession, however, is made for Jews; on the contrary, even the teaching of the Hebrew language to Jewish children is strictly forbidden. Not so very long ago, two aged men, seventy-one and seventy-three years old, were sentenced to six months' hard labour for the heinous crime of teaching Jewish children their prayers; and two hundred children were kept in prison for over a fortnight in Vinnitza, Podolia, because they refused to betray the name and whereabouts of their Hebrew teachers. Religious instruction has, therefore, to be given clandestinely, underground or in lofts, and at midnight, with both the teachers and the taught being haunted by the fear of spies and informers—all as in the days of the Inquisition."

In Moscow they tell a tale which illustrates the changed sympathies of many Jews. Abram Abramovitch met a friend whom he could trust and bewailed the state of the country. "Ach," said he, "if the Czar would only come back, I would kiss his toe."

His friend shook his head sadly. "No, Abram Abramovitch, you would *not* kiss his toe."

"What do you mean?" demanded Abraham angrily. "Why do you say that I would not kiss his toe?"

"You would never reach him. The queue would be too long."

To appreciate this quip fully, you must have witnessed the long queues outside the Moscow shops.

The story of the Baptists is in some ways similar. Under Czarism, the Baptists were persecuted in the cruellest fashion. Their preachers were sent into exile, imprisoned and shot. Their members were hardly treated and their preaching was as far as possible prevented. Even the decrees of 1905 brought them little relief and as late as 1916 every Baptist church was closed by the Government, the pastors exiled to Siberia, and the members treated intolerantly. Parents were separated from their children, that the children might be brought up in the Orthodox faith.

It could easily be imagined that when the Soviet Government allowed, as it did at first allow, freedom to the Baptists, their hearts went out to it. They were allowed to have their own periodicals. They were permitted to open a preachers' school, and throughout the country they were given liberty of service. They were even given the right to import a number of copies of the Bible—which was forbidden through ordinary channels—and one of their supporters had a licence to print the Bible. At the World Congress of Baptists in Stockholm in 1923, representatives came from Russia and were loud in their praise of the liberality of the Government. At the World Congress in Toronto in 1927, the Russian Baptist representatives repeated this praise even more emphatically. Anyone who has not witnessed the services of these Baptist congregations in their humble halls in Russian provincial cities, cannot imagine anything more simple or less political than their worship.

The movement spread rapidly. Large numbers of people who had revolted from the Orthodox Church because of its abuses, found here a religion that appealed to their hearts.

Then the authorities became alarmed, and in 1929 an era of persecution began. Orders were issued in February, 1929, as part of the fresh campaign against all religions for the arrest of Baptist pastors and administrators. Plans were laid to strike at the very heart of the Baptist organization by exiling leaders in key positions. Following the passage of the new religious laws in April, 1929, the position of the Baptists grew still more impossible. Let me quote

from a description which tells of what has happened since.

"After the Red fury had passed, religious freedom was proclaimed. . . . The greatest progress was made by the Baptist Churches, which already were spread from Transcaucasia to the White Sea, and from the Ukraine to Siberia. The first Baptist Church in Russia was formed in 1868. The simplicity of their message of God's intercourse with the individual soul, apart from priests and organizations, appealed strongly; and the number of Baptists reported in Russia by the leaders there was, up to last autumn, anything between one and two millions. The organization was not sufficiently complete to be able to give accurate figures. Such progress, especially since it was reaching the towns and factories now, caused a reaction in the Government, and orders to strike at the leaders and cripple the organization were issued in February last year, and have been carried out with widespread repression since last autumn, not alone of the Baptists, but of all religions. Of three of the Baptist leaders arrested last spring after the order was given 'to strike at the heart of the Baptist organization,' one has died in exile in the White Sea region, one has been released broken and white-haired after nine months' imprisonment as being no longer able to lead, and the other is in exile in a place unknown. The Siberian Baptist Union was dissolved and the leaders sent to prison. The Preachers' Training College in Moscow, built largely by American gifts, was closed by the simple process of imprisoning the staff. The right of religious propaganda was taken away from June, 1929.

"All Baptist publications are now stopped in Russia. The last Baptist paper came in November last with a rubber stamp on it to say there would be no further copies. That was censored so severely that two-thirds was taken out, and even an article on 'How to Find God' was cut. The printing of the Bible was stopped three months after permission was given to print. The right to vote is withdrawn from ministers and deacons of churches, and abnormally heavy taxes are imposed in order to drive them to recant. But, 'Our people do not recant,' says one letter."*

*From a letter from the Rev. E. B. Greening, to the *Manchester Guardian*, March 5th, 1930.

The only reply to this, suggested by Colonel Malone, M.P., is that a number of White Russians, seeing the growing influence of the Baptists, joined them with political rather than religious ends in view. For this, I can find no evidence whatever. "I do not like the colour of your eyes," said the wolf to the lamb. "Grey eyes are dangerous." And so he ate him.

CHAPTER XVII

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

THE persecution of religion in Russia has affronted the conscience of the civilized world. Attempts to deny that it exists and efforts to confuse the issue by charging those who expose it with partisan political aims, have had incomplete success. The occasional extravagant statements of some of the friends of religious freedom in Russia have been used to the full by the advocates of political and religious reaction to excuse and justify the present régime. To me it is amazing that some leading British democrats have allowed this misrepresentation to lead them to defend things wholly repugnant to their tradition and ideals.

The cause of religious freedom in Russia is the cause of political freedom. In advocating it, I am equally and of necessity advocating the better treatment of the vast multitudes of Socialists and progressives who are in prison and exile to-day throughout the Soviet State, often on pretexts as absurd as those employed against the advocates of religion.

What can we do? "We know that you cannot help us or our people except by giving your sympathy and moral support," said the group of Russian Writers in the eloquent appeal printed at the beginning of this book.

We cannot help by a policy of *force*. I know no statesman in Western Europe who contemplates active intervention. For myself, were such a policy even seriously proposed, I should attack it and oppose it with the same strength with which I have endeavoured to fight the persecution of religion.

The policy of active intervention has been tried. Between 1919 and 1921, the Allies fought a united campaign against the Bolshevists. Britain, France, the United States, Canada, Italy and Japan joined in support of the White Armies. We spent scores of millions of pounds, despatched munitions in almost unthinkable quantities, equipped expeditionary

forces and blockaded the Russian coasts with our navies. The effort was a disastrous failure, harmful for us and dreadfully injurious to Russia itself. Its chief results were to lengthen and intensify the agony of the Civil War, to destroy for the time the influences making for moderation within the opposite ranks, and to throw into the arms of the Communists many loyal Russians otherwise without sympathy for them. "My country is attacked," said Brusilov, the former Commander-in-Chief of the Czarist Armies, when placing his services at the disposal of the Moscow Reds.

The same results would follow intervention to-day.

Again I repeat that no serious statesman in Western Europe contemplates the possibility of armed intervention. I am careful to emphasize this, because of the obsession of the Communist leaders that such intervention is in active preparation. The part of Britain is, according to Moscow's belief, to establish a naval base in Estonia, and use this as the point for launching an attack in the north. France is to work through Poland and Roumania to conquer the Ukraine and exploit its resources. Millions of people within Russia have been persuaded by persistent propaganda that such an attack is inevitable and this belief has been used as a basis for raising vast sums for the strengthening and better equipment of the Russian Army and Air Force. Communist orators and writers no longer think it necessary to demonstrate that an Allied invasion is coming. They take it for granted, and use it as a basis for a campaign of hate against the non-Communist West.

The next method, which has many and powerful advocates, is to show our indignation by the political, economical and moral isolation of Russia. To my mind, this policy is also mistaken and I venture to give my reasons why.

The greatest danger for Russia is that its people should be sealed against outside influences. The Communist Government aims to accomplish this, by its strict censorship of the press and by limiting the free intercourse of Russians with other people. Hence, large numbers of intelligent young Russians are growing up with a totally wrong view of the life, the conditions and the mind of the free nations. The average Russian workman to-day is taught and believes that the British working man is a down-trodden slave. Even the average Russian who is not a Communist regards us in his heart as a nation inflamed with hate against his

people. Why should we play into the hands of the Communists who are attempting a moral and intellectual isolation of their victims?

Isolation deepens misunderstanding, strengthens the most extreme elements, and helps to prevent the growth of moderating influences in the ruling classes. No better proof of the real ignorance about Russia that still exists abroad can be found than the fact that the West has time after time concentrated its attacks on the moderate men within the Communist ranks, often at the very hour when they are risking their positions to soften the policy of their colleagues. Krassin, for example, had to defend himself from two sides when endeavouring to steer his country into less extreme channels. He was savagely attacked by his colleagues in Moscow and, at the same time, was denounced and thwarted by politicians and publicists in the West.

The isolation of Russia would not prevent but accentuate the dangers of Communist propaganda among us. There is no secret about how the Communist International works. Its plans, its methods of infiltration, and its efforts to arouse strife and discontent are known to all who have taken the trouble to study them. Detestable as much of its propaganda is, we cannot prevent a propaganda of ideas by legal prohibition. The moment such propaganda passes from theory to practice we have laws to deal with it.

In Britain the Communist efforts have been a conspicuous failure, and will continue to be so, for the whole tendency of the British mind is opposed to it. The British working man who loves freedom soon finds that Communism spells a restriction of liberty which he detests.

I wish to maintain and extend relations, in order that the people of Russia can understand our faith, our aims and our ideals as they really are. The Christ the Communists have rejected is not the Christ I worship. To them he is the friend of the rich and powerful, the defender of injustice and wrong, and the oppressor of the poor. I want to plead with the Russians to study Jesus Christ as He is, and not as He has been misrepresented by many. I cannot do this to a quarantined nation.

Intercourse can alone help us to bring home to the new generation in Russia that the materialism on which Marxism builds itself is an exploded and abandoned theory of life, abandoned, that is, by the vast majority of informed and

forward minds in other lands. Marxian philosophy is a thing of yesterday, and Marxian economics have demonstrated their futility by the present condition of the Russian people.

While intervention by force of arms is impossible and undesirable, and isolation a disaster, moral intervention is not only our right but our bounden duty. For the Christian Churches and for lovers of liberty to remain silent in the face of the persecution of religion and the attack on freedom now proceeding, would be to be false to themselves. It is for the civilized peoples of the world to show the Communist Government the grief, resentment and indignation which the present persecution provokes. And it may be desirable for our own Ministers to make friendly representations, either alone, in concert with other Powers, or through some agreed organization, to help to better the situation. One would suggest the League of Nations as a suitable channel, except for the fact that the League is regarded by the Communist leaders with settled hostility as a bourgeois institution.

We should seize every opportunity to remind the Communist rulers that in pursuing their present policy they are alienating the sympathy and chilling the friendship of many who would gladly help them into the comity of nations, and giving a handle for attack to their enemies. Moral force does count, and this persecution is enlisting the conscience of the world against the present Russian Government.

We approach Soviet Russia, not with arms in our hands and not with threats, but with pleas and prayers for our suffering co-religionists.

. . . . .

I was visiting a famous prison in Central Siberia and word went round among the prisoners that a stranger was among them. They did not know who I was. I might well be, for all they could tell, a representative of the mighty Peoples' Commissars in Moscow. It was enough that I was a man from the outside world, through whom they could broadcast their message.

They gathered their prison choir together at a point near the main corridor leading to the outer door, through which they knew I must pass when I left. A priest was the choir

master, a priest sent to prison for concealing his church treasures when the Government ordered their surrender. Another priest, convicted of preaching sermons that were not to the liking of the authorities, was the chief singer.

As I approached, they started a famous Russian prisoners' song, the tragic plea of a prisoner for freedom. "Break our chains! Give us liberty!" came the chorus. "And we will teach you how to love freedom!"

The hall echoed with the heart-moving pathos of the beautifully harmonized men's voices. It was a bitter winter night, the snow was falling heavily and a fierce wind was whirling it around. But as I passed out into the open roadway, I was not conscious of the fierce breeze beating against my furs or of the snow against my face, for the heavens themselves seemed echoing the plea: "Break our chains."

As I write these last words, in the early dawn of a spring morning, it seems that I can hear the plea of the multitude of the victims of oppression, in the concentration camps of Solovetsky, in the inner prison of Loubyanka, in outlying villages and stations, and in lonely villages of northern and eastern Siberia, where the snow still lies deep and the long, dark winter has still weeks to run. "Break our chains," they plead. "Give us liberty."

"BREAK OUR CHAINS!"

Soon afterwards, the Patriarch made his peace with the Soviet Government, acknowledged that he had been in error in the past and promised to work loyally with the authorities. Thereupon he was released. This submission came as a relief to the authorities, for they had been alarmed by the storm created by the judicial murder of Budkiewich, and knew that the Christian nations were ready to protest still more emphatically, should prosecution be pushed to an extreme against Tikhon himself.

The leaders of the Living Church were now triumphant. Tikhon was deposed and in disgrace. Congregations were allowed to choose to a limited extent if they would adhere to the Patriarch, or the new Synod, but the great cathedrals were handed over to the New Church, and all possible pressure was employed to make congregations join it. In numerous provincial cities the priests who refused were thrown into prison. Many bishops were arrested for refusing obedience. Congregations were turned out of their churches and had to worship in barns and shops. As a result of this

pressure a number of priests throughout the country did join the Living Church, and Edovkin and Vvedensky seemed for the moment supreme. But all over Russia the people refused to follow the priests. The Living Church had the great buildings and the splendid pageantry, but not the people. The great mass of lay folk was still faithful to Tikhon.

The Patriarch lived in modest rooms in the Donskoi Monastery in a southern quarter of Moscow, where he had been imprisoned during part of his time of arrest. Every morning crowds would gather of faithful souls waiting to see him, sometimes with petitions, sometimes begging for direction in matters of faith, sometimes wishing merely to pay him reverence. Travelling, as I then was, in some of the most outlying parts of the Republic, I found that as soon as people knew that I was a friend of the Patriarch, they would do almost anything for me. They would beg to know all details of his life, how he looked and how he lived. They gave me messages for him, messages which had no mention of anything political, but told of how the hearts of the people beat true to him and begged him to send secretly instructions telling them what they should do.

I shall not soon forget, how in one of the most desolate parts of Arctic Russia I arrived at a village, far from all other human habitations, and went to the house of the priest. He was very suspicious, as he was well advised to be, and for long I could learn nothing from him. Then from a word that I dropped here and there he realized that I knew the Patriarch. The priest's suspicions thawed like ice in a Bessemer furnace, and when finally I had to go, he came to the riverside to see me off in my boat, whispering last words of affection for his chief Pastor, and seeking to kiss the hem of my coat.

Tikhon had to move very carefully, for in the crowds waiting to pay him reverence were many spies. "The walls have ears here," said one bishop to me. He told me time after time in quiet and convincing fashion of the falseness of the charge that he was in any way plotting against the Government. He did not profess to be a Bolshevist or to sympathize with Bolshevism, but since the Bolshevists were in power and the rulers of the State it was his duty to serve them loyally. A woman in America had sent him a hundred dollars shortly before one of our meetings. The Patriarch,

poor though he was, promptly returned it. "If I took her money," he told me, "they would promptly charge me with accepting White funds for the purpose of destroying the Government." His heart was very heavy at the thought of his faithful followers, including some of his immediate assistants, who were in prison. The authorities, not daring to proceed to extremes with him, revenged themselves on those around him. Sometimes I would miss men I had known and, on inquiry, would be told that they had been arrested. Now it was bishops who disappeared and now the humblest workers. The people who were specially marked in their protestations of loyalty when the Patriarch visited provincial churches, were noted by the police spies and duly punished.

This could not, however, check the popular demonstrations. On one feast day, the leaders of the Living Church had announced a special service at the Cathedral of the Holy Saviour, when numerous Metropolitans, Archbishops, and Bishops would take part. I went to the service, which was ornate and splendid almost beyond words, and worthy of the sumptuously beautiful interior where it was held. The only drawback was the paucity of the congregation.

From that service I moved on to another, in a suburban parish church where the Patriarch was to preach. I could not get near the church because of the crowds around. It was a hot summer Sunday, and the interior was so packed that sections of the standing congregation had to move out at intervals to get a breath of fresh air, their places being promptly taken by others.

Many of the priests who had hastily joined the Living Church found themselves starving, because their old congregations would not follow them, nor support them.

Tikhon did not talk much about his degradation by the Holy Synod, regarding it as uncanonical and void. The bitterest thing that he said to me was a little play on two Russian words: "Living Church" became by the change of a letter "Lying Church", and it was the second name that he used in describing it.

When Tikhon died, tens of thousands of people flocked to pay homage to his memory. Religion was not yet dead, even in Moscow, the red heart of Communism.

The Church had lost many time-servers, but it was in a much more healthy condition than in its days of wealth

and prosperity. Persecution had cleansed and spiritualized it. Many intellectuals who had been touched by cheap scepticism in old days now returned to their faith again. Many of the villagers who had taken the Ikons down from the corners of their rooms for fear of the authorities were ready to revert at the first chance.

Here is a little Moscow story which illustrates this. Karl Radek, the Communist publicist, one of the most brilliant journalists in Europe, incurred the wrath of Stalin and was sent into exile. The Moscow gossips relate how he was assigned by the police to the same village where he had been exiled by the Czar's Government.

Soon after his arrival he met an old peasant who had known him in his former days, and had noted his rise to power, but had not yet learnt anything of his fresh disgrace.

"Ah, Karl Borisovitch," said the old peasant cringingly, "now that your side has won, you are a very great man. Why have they sent you here? Are you to be governor of our province?

"No," Radek replied briefly, "not governor of the province."

"Have they made you General in charge of the armies?"

"No," Radek again replied. "I am not General."

"What are you, then?" the old man persisted.

"I am once more in exile."

The old peasant's jaw dropped in surprise. Then he hurried to the door and shouted to his sons who were working in a barn. "Ivan, Antoine, come quickly! Bring out the Ikons; put up the cross; the new men have lost and are turned out!"

THE END