

A UNITED FRONT

IN an admirable article on the Spanish situation by the Dominican Father H. Munoz these words occur¹: 'What Spain needed was an intelligent organizer who could co-ordinate all the disjointed elements into a united front against the destructive forces of irreligion and anarchy.' On reading this it is impossible not to reflect that this is an echo of what many English Catholics have been saying about their own country for a long time.

The present position of Catholics in England is not so very far removed from that of Catholics in Spain just before the revolution. Indifference and lack of organization sold the pass and allowed the forces of an anti-religious Socialism to seize power. And not till the Catholics of Spain found their churches pillaged, convents burned, schools secularized, religious orders expelled and a sheaf of anti-Catholic laws on the statute book did they wake up to the realities of the situation and organize themselves into a force which now promises to be the salvation of Spain.

In England, a generation of ever-increasing indifference in matters of faith and morals has enabled the anti-God propaganda of Moscow to make tremendous progress. The traditional Conservative and Protestant party, product of the Reformation, exists in a fog. In matters of faith and morals they simply do not know where they stand, having neither standards nor guidance. And from not knowing to not caring is but a short step.

Liberalism no longer counts. The more extreme Liberals have gone over to Labour. A few have thrown in their lot with the Conservatives. The rest plough a lonely furrow in the wilderness.

There is, unfortunately, plenty of evidence to show that Labour is strongly tainted with Communism. In spite of official disavowals of Communist sympathies, Labour, with its close ally, the Co-operative Movement, goes hand-in-

¹ BLACKFRIARS, October, 1934.

glove with many of the subversive societies which, under high-sounding titles, are the active agents in this country of Moscow and the world-revolutionary Third International. A Labour Government in unfettered power will certainly mean a government with a Communist outlook and intentions, though it may repudiate the title.

And neither Liberalism nor Conservatism nor any coalition of these parties offers any assurance of security against Moscow's advance: for on many points, particularly issues governed by the moral law, they have the same tainted outlook as Labour, and on others they are indifferent.

In face of this, what does the future hold for Catholics? England is losing its grip on religion, and before long, whatever name it may go under, we shall see a party in power at Westminster holding views which will mean trouble for Catholics, and indeed for all who still revere the Christian tradition. The normal opposition will furnish neither protection nor encouragement for those who stand for the old ideals.

The outlook is black but quite certain. We shall undoubtedly see in the near future laws on the statute book which will do violence to the Catholic and Christian conscience. There will be some protest, of course, but of sturdy opposition none that will have any chance of success unless we avail ourselves of the time that is still ours and organize our forces.

An organized and united Catholic public opinion, backed by a determination to suffer if necessary, is England's great need to-day. For persecution in some form will inevitably follow a Catholic refusal to acquiesce quietly in these new laws which are in the making.

There may be a few people who will protest that this is an exaggeration. And all the while the proofs pile up, day by day. The *Daily Herald*, the *Daily Worker*, the magazines issued by the various co-operative societies, the pamphlets and periodical notes put out by the Christian Protest Movement, the Catholic press and the publications bearing on Communism issued by the Catholic Truth Society are full of them, furnished impartially by

both sides. There are at least twenty-four Communist societies working unmolested in this country for the overthrow of religion and the Christian social order. The co-operative societies are honeycombed with Communist activities; anti-religious films and plays are put on at co-operative halls all over the country, and there is neither action nor protest either by the people of this country or by those whose duty it is to protect the people from the revolution which threatens. The fact that the condoning of this atheistic advance is an insult to God does not seem to concern more than a mere handful of the people, none of the nation's leaders, and apparently not even a majority of Catholics.

The only possible conclusion is that non-Catholic England is tending more and more towards the things for which atheistic Communism stands and with which Catholicism must be for ever at enmity; and Catholics as a body do not yet realize the significance of this. Our fight is no longer against Protestantism, but against creeping atheism. The Catholics of Spain did not realize what threatened them till it was almost too late. But the numerical strength of Spain's Catholics, focussed into unity of action by bold and imaginative leadership, secured for them a second chance. Is it likely that the Catholics of this country, a mere six per cent. or less of the population, would be allowed a second chance?

We know what lack of preparedness and co-ordination has cost the Catholics of Spain. Must we in England also pass through tragic days before we find either leadership or unity? The move rests with our numerous Catholic action societies and their leaders, to create a united front against the destructive forces of irreligion and anarchy in this country *while there is still time.*

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