Letters to the Editors

To All Active Supporters of Democracy and Peace

Dear Sirs: One of the gravest problems confronting all those engaged in the struggle for democracy and peace, whether they be liberals, progressives, trade unionists, or others, is how to unite their various forces so as to achieve victory for their common goals. The fascists and their allies are well aware that democracy will win if its supporters are united. Accordingly, they are intent on destroying such unity at all costs.

On the international scene the fascists and their friends have tried to prevent a united anti-aggression front by sowing suspicion between the Soviet Union and other nations interested in maintaining peace. On the domestic scene the reactionaries are attempting to split the democratic front by similar tactics. Realizing that here in America they cannot get far with a definitely pro-fascist appeal, they strive to pervert American anti-fascist sentiment to their own ends. With the aim of turning anti-fascist feeling against the Soviet Union they have encouraged the fantastic falsehood that the U. S. S. R. and the totalitarian states are basically alike. By this strategy they hope to create dissension among the progressive forces whose united strength is a first necessity for the defeat of fascism.

Some sincere American liberals have fallen into this trap and unwittingly aided a cause to which they are essentially opposed. Thus, a number of them carelessly lent their signatures to the recent manifesto issued by the so-called Committee for Cultural Freedom. This manifesto denounces in vague, undefined terms all forms of “dictatorship” and asserts that the fascist states and Soviet Russia equally menace American institutions and the democratic way of life.

While we prefer to dwell on facts rather than personalities, we feel it is necessary to point out that among the signers of this manifesto are individuals who have for years had as their chief political objective the maligning of the Soviet people and their government.

A number of other committees have been formed which give lip-service to democracy and peace while actually attacking the Soviet Union and aiding reaction. . . .

The undersigned do not represent any committee or organization, nor do they propose to form one. Our object is to point out the real purpose behind all these attempts to bolster the Soviet Union with the fascist states, and to make it clear that Soviet and fascist policies are diametrically opposed. To this end we should like to stress ten basic points in which Soviet socialism differs from totalitarian fascism.

1. The Soviet Union continues as always to be a bulwark against war and aggression, and works unceasingly for a peaceful international order.

2. It has eliminated racial and national prejudice within its borders, freed the minority peoples enslaved under the czars, stimulated the culture and economic welfare of these peoples, and made the expression of anti-Semitism or any racial animosity a criminal offense.

3. It has socialized the means of production and distribution through the public ownership of industry and the collectivization of agriculture.

4. It has established nation-wide socialist planning, resulting in increasingly higher living standards and the abolition of unemployment.

5. It has built the trade unions, in which almost 24,000,000 workers are organized, into the very fabric of its society.

6. The Soviet Union has emancipated woman and the family, and has developed an advanced system of child care.

7. From the viewpoint of cultural freedom, the difference between the Soviet Union and the fascist countries is most striking. The Soviet Union has effected one of the most far-reaching cultural and educational advances in all history and among a population which at the start was almost three-fourths illiterate. Those writers and thinkers whose books have been burned by the Nazis are published in the Soviet Union. The best literature from Homer to Thomas Mann, the best thought from Aristotle to Lenin, are available to the masses of the Soviet people. . . .

8. It has replaced the myths and superstitions of old Russia with the truths and techniques of experimental science, extending scientific procedures to every field, from economics to public health.

9. The Soviet Union considers political dictatorship a transitional form and has shown a steadily expanding democracy in every sphere. Its epoch-making new constitution guarantees Soviet citizens universal suffrage, civil liberties, the right to employment, to leisure, to free education, to free medical care, to material security in sickness and old age, to equality of the sexes in all fields of activity, and to equality of all races and nationalities.

10. In relation to Russia’s past, the country has been advancing rapidly along the road of material and cultural progress in ways that the American people can understand and appreciate.

The Soviet Union has an economic system different from our own. But Soviet aims and achievements make it clear that there exists a sound and permanent basis in mutual ideals for cooperation between the U. S. A. and the U. S. S. R. in behalf of world peace and the security and freedom of all nations.

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