
To All Active Supporters of Democracy and Peace:

The text of an Open Letter calling for greater unity of the anti-fascist forces and strengthening of the front against aggression through closer cooperation with the Soviet Union, released on August 14 by 400 leading Americans.

As published in *Soviet Russia Today*, v. 8, no. 5 (Sept. 1939), pp. 24-25, 28.

ONE of the greatest 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 antifascist 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 USSR 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 have 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, and it is precisely these people who are the initiators and controllers of the committee.

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. Honest persons approached by such committees should scrutinize their aims very carefully and support only those groups genuinely interested in preserving culture and freedom and refusing to serve as instruments for attacking the Soviet Union or aiding Fascism in any other way.

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 bracket 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 fundamentally from totalitarian fascism.

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

2. It has eliminated racial and national prejudice within its borders, freed the minority peoples enslaved under the Tsars, stimulated the development of 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 nationwide socialist planning, resulting in increasingly higher living standards and the abolition of unemployment and depression.

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, is available to the masses of the Soviet people, who themselves actively participate in the creation of culture.

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. And it has made science and scientific study available to the mass of the people.

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 USSR on behalf of world peace and the security and freedom of all nations.

Accordingly, the signers of this letter urge Americans of whatever political persuasion to stand firmly for close cooperation in this sphere between the United States and Soviet Russia, and to be on guard against any and all attempts to prevent such cooperation in this critical period in the affairs of mankind.

Among the 400 Signers of the Open Letter Are:

Dr. Thomas Addis, *Professor of Medicine, Leland Stanford University*

Helen Alfred, *Executive Director National Public Housing Conference*

Prof. Newton Arvin, *Professor of English, Smith College*

Dr. Charles S. Bacon, *Honorary President, American Russian Institute, Chicago, Ill.*

Frank C. Bankcroft, *Editor, Social Work Today*

Bessie Beatty, *writer*

Maurice Becker, *artist*

Meta Berger, *writer, widow of the first Socialist Congressman*

Louis P. Birk, *Editor, Modern Age Books, Inc.*

T.A. Bisson, *Research Associate, Foreign Policy Association*

Alice Stone Blackwell, *suffragist, writer*

Katherine Devereaux Blake, *teacher*

Mark Blitzstein, *composer*

Anita Block, *Theatre Guild playreader*

- Stirling Bowen, *poet*
Richard Boyer, *staff writer*, The New Yorker
Millen Brand, *writer*
Simon Breines, *architect*
Prof. Dorothy Brewster, *Assistant Professor of English*,
Columbia University
Robert Briffault, *writer*
Prof. Edwin Berry Burgum, *Associate Professor of*
Economics, University of California
Fielding Burke, *writer*
J.E. Bromberg, *actor*
Vea Caspary, *scenario writer*
Prof. Haakon Chevalier, *Professor of French, Univer-*
sity of California
Maria Christina Chambers, *Research Professor of*
Biology, New York University
Harold Clurman, *producer*
Robert M. Coates, *writer*
Lester Cohen, *writer*
Prof. George B. Cressey, *Chairman of the Depart-*
ment of Geology and Geography, Syracuse University
Kyle Crichton, *editorial staff of Collier's Weekly*
Miriam Allen de Ford, *writer*
Paul de Kruif, *writer*
Pietro di Donato, *writer*
William F. Dodd, Jr., *Chairman, Anti-Nazi Litera-*
ture Committee
Stanley D. Dodge, *University of Michigan*
Prof. Dorothy Douglas, *Department of Economics*,
Smith College
Muriel Draper, *writer*
Prof. L.C. Dunn, *Professor of Zoology, Columbia*
University
Harriet G. Eddy, *library specialist*
Prof. Henry Pratt Fairchild, *Professor of Sociology*,
New York University
Prof. Mildred Fairchild, *Professor of Economics, Bryn*
Mawr College
Kenneth Fearing, *poet*
Alicce Withrow Field, *writer*
Sara Bard Field, *writer*
William O. Field, Jr., *Chairman of the Board, Ameri-*
can Russian Institute
Irving Fineman, *writer*
Marjorie Fischer, *writer*
Angel Flores, *writer, critic*
Waldo Frank, *writer*
Wanda Gag, *artist*
Hugo Gellert, *artist*
Robert Gessner, *Department of English, New York*
University
Prof. Willystine Goodsell, *Associate Professor of*
Education (retired), Columbia University
Mortimer Graves, *of the American Council of Learned*
Societies
Dr. John H. Gray, *economist, former President of the*
American Economics Association
William Gropper, *artist*
Maurice Halperin, *Associate Editor, Books Abroad*
Earl P. Hanson, *explorer, writer*
Prof. Samuel N. Harper, *Professor of Russian Lan-*
guage and Institutions, Chicago University
Rev. Thomas L. Harris, *National Executive Secretary,*
American League for Peace and Democracy
Dashiell Hammett, *writer*
Ernest Hemmingway
Granville Hicks, *writer*
Prof. Norman E. Himes, *Department of Sociology,*
Colgate University
Charles J. Hendley, *President Teachers' Union of the*
City of New York
Leo Huberman, *writer*
Langston Hughes, *poet*
Agatha Illes, *writer*
Rev. Otis G. Jackson, *Rector of St. Paul's Episcopal*
Church, Flint, Michigan
Sam Jaffe, *actor*

- Orrick Johns, *poet*
 Matthew Josephson, *writer*
 George Kauffman, *playwright*
 Prof. Alexander Kaun, *Associate Professor of Slavic Languages, University of California*
 Fred C. Kelly, *writer*
 Rockwell Kent, *artist*
 Dr. John A. Kingsbury, *social worker, Administrative Consultant, W.P.A.*
 Beatrice Kinkead, *writer*
 Lincoln E. Kirstein, *ballet producer*
 Arthur Kober, *playwright*
 Alfred Kreymborg, *poet*
 Edward Lamb, *lawyer*
 Dr. Corliss Lamont, *writer, lecturer*
 Margaret I. Lamont, *sociologist*
 J.J. Lankes, *artist*
 Jay Leyda, *cinema critic*
 John Howard Lawson, *playwright*
 Emil Lengyle, *writer, critic*
 Prof. Max Lerner, *Professor of Government, Williams College*
 Meridel LeSeuer, *writer*
 Meyer Levin, *writer*
 Prof. Charles W. Lightbody, *Department of Government and History, St. Lawrence University*
 Robert Morss Lovett, *Governor of the Virgin Islands, and Editor of The New Republic.*
 Prof. Halford E. Luccock, *Yale University Divinity School*
 Katherine DuPré Lumpkin, *writer*
 Klaus Mann, *lecturer, writer, son of Thomas Mann*
 Prof. F.O. Mathiessen, *Associate Professor of History of Literature, Harvard University*
 Dr. Anita Marburg, *Department of English, Sarah Lawrence College*
 Dr. George Marshall, *economist*
 Clifford T. McAvoy, *Instructor, Department of Romance Languages, College of the City of New York*
 Prof. V.J. McGill, *Professor of Philosophy, Hunter College*
 Prof. Robert McGregor, *Reed College*
 Ruth McKenney, *writer*
 Darwin J. Meserole, *lawyer*
 Prof. Herbert A. Miller, *Professor of Economics, Bryn Mawr College*
 Harvey O'Connor, *writer*
 Clifford Odets, *playwright*
 Shaemus O'Sheel, *writer, critic*
 Mary White Ovington, *social worker*
 S.J. Perelman, *writer*
 Dr. John P. Peters, *Department of Internal Medicine, Yale University Medical School*
 Dr. Emily M. Pierson, *physician*
 Walter N. Polakov, *engineer*
 Prof. Alan Porter, *Professor of German, Vassar College*
 Geroge D. Pratt, Jr., *agriculturalist*
 John Hyde Preston, *writer*
 Samuel Putnam, *writer*
 Prof. Paul Radin, *Professor of Anthropology, University of California*
 Prof. Walter Rautenstrauch, *Professor of Industrial Engineering, Columbia University*
 Bernard J. Reis, *accountant*
 Bertha C. Reynolds, *social worker*
 Lynn Riggs, *playwright*
 Col. Raymond Robins, *former head of American Red Cross in Russia*
 William Rollis, Jr., *writer*
 Harold J. Rome, *composer*
 Ralph Roeder, *writer*
 Dr. Joseph Rosen, *former head, Jewish Joint Distribution Board*
 Eugene Schoen, *architect*

- Prof. Margaret Schlauch, *Associate Professor of English, New York University*
- Prof. Frederick L. Schuman, *Professor of Government, Williams College*
- Prof. Vida D. Scudder, *Professor Emeritus of English, Wellesley College*
- George Seldes, *writer*
- Vincent Sheean, *writer*
- Viola Brothers Shore, *scenario writer*
- Herbert Shumlin, *producer*
- Prof. Ernest J. Simmons, *Assistant Professor of English Literature, Harvard University*
- Irina Skariatina, *writer*
- Dr. F. Tredwell Smith, *educator*
- Dr. Stephenson Smith, *President Oregon Commonwealth Federation*
- Hester Sondergaard, *actress*
- Isobel Walker Soule, *writer, editor*
- Lionel Stander, *actor*
- Christina Stead, *writer*
- A.E. Steig, *artist*
- Alfred K. Stern, *housing specialist*
- Dr. Bernhard J. Stern, *Department of Sociology, Columbia University*
- Donald Ogden Steward, *writer*
- Maxwell S. Steward, *Associate Editor, The Nation*
- Paul Strand, *producer and photographer*
- Prof. Dirk J. Struik, *Professor of Mathematics, Massachusetts Institute of Technology*
- Robert Tasker, *scenario writer*
- C. Fayette Taylor, *aeronautical engineer, head of Automotive Labs, Massachusetts Institute of Technology*
- James Thurber, *artist, writer*
- Rebecca Janney Timbres, *social worker, writer*
- Jean Starr Untermeyer, *poet*
- Louis Untermeyer, *poet*
- Mary van Kleeck, *economist, Associate Director International Industrial Relations Institute*
- Stuyvesant van Veen, *artist*
- J. Raymond Walsh, *economist*
- Dr. William Henry Walsh, *physician*
- Prof. Harry F. Ward, *Professor of Christian Ethics, Union Theological Seminary*
- Lynd Ward, *artist*
- Morris Watson, *New York Newspaper Guild*
- Clara Weatherwax, *writer*
- Max Weber, *artist*
- Dr. Gerald Wendt, *Director of Science and Education, New York World's Fair*
- Rev. Robert Whitaker, *clergyman and lecturer*
- Albert Rhys Williams, *writer*
- Dr. William Carlos Williams, *writer*
- Ella Winter, *writer*
- Richard Wright, *writer*
- Art Young, *artist*
- Leane Zugsmith, *writer*

Edited by Tim Davenport.

Published by 1000 Flowers Publishing, Corvallis, OR, 2005. • Free reproduction permitted.