MY DAY

Dictators Used Measures Like the Mundt Bill

By ELEANOR ROOSEVELT

HYDE PARK, Monday—It is a curious thing that, among those aligned against the Mundt bill, one finds people belonging to the extreme left and to the extreme right, and also those in the middle—the moderate liberals, like myself, who dislike seeing us fight Communism by extreme measures.

I feel that, in using repressive measures, we are not only underlining our fears that democracy cannot stand up against the superficial attraction of Communism, but we are resorting to the very measures which dictatorships—both Fascist and Communist—use to stay in power.

I have always said that I saw a difference between the Communist of Russia and other totalitarian governments, but their methods are strangely similar. The price paid for the results obtained under all form of totalitarian government is the surrender of individual freedom. If in a democracy, in order to protect ourselves from Communism, we also surrender our freedom, we are no better off. The Mundt-Nixon bill is, from my point of view, a dangerous bill.

• • •

OUR Attorney General has just come to the conclusion, according to the papers, that Communism all over the world stands for the overthrow of existing governments by force, and that therefore no one who declares himself a Communist can be a good citizen of a democracy. I have known a number of theoretical Communists who certainly were not going around with guns.

The only ones I think have any real justification in being Communists, and who might possibly be tempted to overthrow any government by force, are those for whom democracy has not provided the basic needs of decent living. That is the point on which I wish we would focus our fight against communism — not on repressive measures which drive Communists underground, but on the development of democracy so that no human can find any great attraction in the rather drab program of Communism.

• • •

OF course, in the USSR everyone is employed by the government. The interesting thing to know, however, would be the conditions under which many people are obliged to work and live. But that, of course, we cannot know as long as there is no free interchange of visitors between the two countries and no free travel once you are across the borders of Russia.

To obtain one of the four freedoms, freedom from want, and the others, is a poor bargain; and yet, unless one obtains freedom from want, one probably is not other freedoms. That is why I would like to see us stop all the thought and time given to restrictive measures such as the Mundt Bill, and try to do a little constructive thinking in an effort to advance our democracy and make it stronger and less responsive to fear.

Mr. Tolson
Mr. B. A. T.
Mr. Clegg
Mr. Coffey
Mr. Glavin
Mr. Ladd
Mr. Nichols
Mr. Rosen
Mr. Tracy
Mr. Carson
Mr. Egan
Mr. Hendon
Mr. Pennington
Mr. Quinn Tamm
Mr. Nease
Miss Gandy

RECORDED - 31

62-61735-A

APR 22 1948

JUL 9 1948

WASHINGTON NEWS JUL 1 1948