MY DAY

We Must Teach Our Youth What Democracy Means

By ELEANOR ROOSEVELT

HYDE PARK, Tuesday—I wonder how many readers of a certain column in one of the metropolitan papers detected, as I thought I did, a purpose in relating two stories—one about a U. S. Government employe and the other about an individual recently escaped from Russia.

First we were told the story of a woman employe in this country and the curious way in which she was treated; then the story of the way a non-citizen of Russia who migrated into that country because he had great hopes of the regime there but was disillusioned and tried to return to his own country. He was not allowed to leave, but was arrested and taken to Siberia from where he has recently escaped. He cannot tell his story without fear of harm, and it points up for us the ultimate horrors of a police state.

From my point of view, these incidents most successfully sharpened the need that we must be wary about our own freedoms and not to take the first steps that lead to the ultimate control of the freedom of the individual in a police state.

The two incidents emphasized the necessity of discontinuing the Un-American Activities Committee methods and of disallowing them powers which they are now asking, compelling anyone brought before the group to answer the committee's questions.

Instead of this, I think the law under which the Federal Bureau of Investigation operates should be strengthened, and the FBI should be made the responsible body to search out Communists in this country, prove their guilt and ask for their punishment.

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THE articles to which I refer also point to the real need for strengthening our educational system to make sure that every youngster learns what Communism is and what Democracy is and why Democracy is of more value to them than is Communism.

No citizen in this country should fall for Communist doctrines based only on an ideal picture of the value of something about which they know nothing. On the other hand, every citizen should be perfectly able to explain why he believes in Democracy. He should understand the faults and failings of Democracy, and the requirements it makes of its citizens if it is to work successfully. If he had this knowledge, he would not be left defenseless and without answer in the face of either concealed or open Communist propaganda.

The type of thing that is going on at present is destructive and gives us nothing constructive to work on. It makes everybody suspicious of everybody else. It makes everybody afraid of showing any ordinary curiosity on certain subjects that are so largely advertised in the press that it would be odd if many were not curious about them.

In other words, it makes us live under a cloud that is less heavy than that which exists in a police state but which has within it the germ of growth, and which certainly we who cherish our freedoms should guard against.

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