

It is also wise to insist realistically on what the Soviet press calls a "Western orientation". (The possession of such an orientation in the "Soviet zone" is in itself enough for the Soviet press to label a man a "fascist beast" - an appellation which is usually no idle threat where Communist writs run).

These considerations would suggest a reasonably generous policy toward Italy - though we must obviously not be stampeded by the very astute Italian propaganda into disregarding essential political safeguards.

A policy for Spain would also seem over-due. The Soviet Union possesses just war-crime claims, for the activities of the "Blue Division" on the Eastern front, which it will presumably press at a politically opportune moment. The Spanish people also remember what they consider their betrayal by the democratic powers during the civil war. We will be foolish if through preoccupation with other fields, or through the traditions of liberal "non-interference", we allow the Soviet Union to acquire too dominant influence in the future Spain without reliable counter-balancing advantage to ourselves in the Balkans. We will be no less foolish if through conservative prejudice we encourage or allow the perpetuation of a reactionary regime which will make Spain a potential trouble-spot for the future, and make the people of Spain turn from us in final disillusion.

3) PUBLIC OPINION

The Soviet Government obviously attaches profound importance to propaganda policy in foreign countries. Its main techniques in dealing with the foreign press were analysed in our despatch No. 172 of April 6th. The simultaneous creation, in most countries throughout the world, of organisations such as the Canadian-Soviet Friendship Society is an obvious result of a Communist Party circular directive, though certainly many of the leaders of such societies are unaware of the secret instigation.

Much of the Soviet propaganda is not only unexceptionable but useful to international understanding. Some however is not. The world-wide attempt to debase and distort the meaning of such words as "democracy", "unanimity", and "freedom" could become dangerous. The immediate hostility of the Soviet Government and communist parties to Mr. Kent Cooper's "Freedom of Information" campaign illustrates their awareness of their vulnerability on this point.

The marked war-time swing of public opinion in all democratic countries toward a starry-eyed adulation of the Soviet Union has been a natural by-product of the magnificent Soviet war effort. It has also been a healthy corrective to the widespread pre-war ignorance, suspicion, and hostility toward Russia, which must be counted one of the main causes of World War II.

The many admirable features of Soviet society which have been so mightily publicised are in general quite true. They form, however, only one essential part of the truth, and taken by themselves are gravely misleading. Serious misconceptions, widely held, can in a democracy be mortal dangers.

The stories of tremendous constructive energy, of vast and imaginative developments, are perfectly true. True too is