such as the sponge diaphragm, may help, but the problem will remain. Sol Gordon and I probably agree on this.

As a humanist I resent the misleading statistics of the Guttmacher Institute in its earlier publication portraying an epidemic of teen-age pregnancy, which have been seized upon by the mass media to paint an unrealistic picture of teen-agers. Its latest publication is much better but it too emphasizes the negative rather than the positive. To point out that sometimes the emperor has no clothes might be painful to those who persist in believing that he does, but I think it is a good thing. In short, if Sol Gordon cannot recognize his friends anymore, he is in deep trouble, and so is the whole field of sex education.

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**My Attitude Toward the Soviet Union**

**Corliss Lamont**

I am bored stiff by Sidney Hook’s long-winded, two-page letter in *FREE INQUIRY* (Winter 1981) attacking me a second time for my attitude toward the Soviet Union and its critics, centering around an Open Letter signed by some 400 Americans, including myself, more than 40 years ago in September 1939. This document pointed out ten basic differences between Soviet Socialism and totalitarian Fascism and was designed to show that “there exists a sound and permanent basis” in mutual aims “for cooperation between the USA and the USSR on behalf of world peace.” I believe that the Open Letter helped encourage the American people to welcome and assist the Soviet Union when a little more than two years later the United States became its ally in World War II. Hook’s exaggerated objections to one sentence in the Open Letter that he deliberately misinterpreted are too trivial to refute once more.

Professor Hook assails me bitterly in his second letter for having initially defended the Moscow Trials of 1936-38, although I later repudiated that position and denounced “Stalin’s terrible tyranny.” I have constantly deplored the lack of civil liberties and democracy in the USSR. But I have praised the Soviets for their achievements in other fields, such as socio-economic planning, social services, the liberation of women, medicine, free education, science, space technology, and their massive role in the defeat of Nazi Germany in World War II. I still regard the Soviet Union with “critical sympathy,” as I do many other countries.

Hook, on the other hand, when discussing the Soviet Union, concentrates almost entirely on its lamentable political dictatorship and denounces as a scoundrel anyone who finds something good in Soviet society. He has a strange, pathological obsession about me and apparently wishes to ruin my reputation by citing my alleged mistakes concerning the Soviet Union. Well, I frankly confess to having made errors of judgment about the USSR and other nations as well. Who hasn’t?

However, to judge Americans primarily in terms of their views on foreign affairs is unjustified, yet constantly resorted to by enemies of the Soviet regime. Ever since the great Russian Revolution of 1917 this has been a most unfortunate divisive factor among U.S. radicals and liberals. Hook pretends that the chief interest in my life has been the Soviet Union and never mentions my other main interests, such as the philosophy of Humanism, the conservation of Nature, civil liberties, and international peace. During the past two decades I have become less and less concerned about the USSR.

But what about Hook himself, who is so fond of vilifying others? This is the man who in his 1953 book, *Heresy, Yes—But Conspiracy, No*, claimed that Communists should not have the protection of the Bill of Rights because they were in conspiracy to subvert the government and the Constitution. This volume provided an intellectual basis for the wild anti-Communist witch-hunt and the worst ravages of McCarthyism. In the same year Hook’s American Committee for Cultural Freedom outrageously smeared the Emergency Civil Liberties Committee as “a Communist front.” This is the man, too, who supported the shameful U.S. military aggression in Vietnam, who in 1970 advised Richard Nixon on how to quell the nationwide unrest among college and university students over the Vietnam War, and who ignominiously paid a complimentary visit to this corrupt president in the White House. Is it any wonder that Sidney Hook has been called “the intellectuals’ Joe McCarthy”?

Finally, Hook castigates me for not protesting against the Soviet Government’s treatment of dissidents in more recent years. I must admit that, as I struggled through the seventies to my present age of almost 80, I became a bit tired and less inclined to make public pronouncements on controversial issues. My last press statement about the Soviet Union was a letter published by the *New York Times* on December 3, 1970, and apparently overlooked by nonchalance Hook. Here is the letter, headed “Rights Denied in USSR”:

> It is welcome news for all supporters of civil liberties that three prominent Soviet physicists have formed a committee for human rights to defend free speech and other freedoms in the Soviet Union. (News story, Nov. 16.) Lovers of freedom will wish this committee all success.

> Unfortunately, over the past few years the Soviet authorities have repeatedly sent dissenters to labor camps for criticizing some aspect of Government policy. Among the most recent victims are Revolt I. Pimenov, Leningrad mathematician, sentenced to five years; and Andrei A. Amalrik, author of “Will the Soviet Union Survive Until 1984?” sentenced to three years.

> Now, 53 years after the great Russian Revolution of 1917, it is high time for the Soviet Government to permit the full freedom of expression that is guaranteed in the noteworthy Soviet Constitution of 1936. Article 125 states: “In conformity with the interests of the working people, and in order to strengthen the socialist system, the citizens of the USSR are guaranteed by law: freedom of speech; freedom of the press; freedom of assembly, including the holding of mass meetings; freedom of street processions and demonstrations.”

> I speak as an American who for many years has been sympathetic toward the many splendid achievements of the Soviet Union and as one who has consistently worked for American-Soviet cooperation and understanding. And I urge that the Soviet Government free all individuals sentenced for mere dissent and make genuine efforts to establish the democratic rights promised in the Soviet Constitution.