

THE BATTLE FOR THE MINDS OF MEN

By Renato Constantino

THE history of the human race is a history of wars. Men have fought and found the fighting costly and painful. But they have fought again and again.

The history of the human race is a search for peace. Even in the days of old when men lived for war, there were those who hated it and sought to end all bloody conflicts.

History therefore may be viewed, in one sense, as the struggle between two impulses—the will to war and the will to peace. These impulses are the manifestations of man's opposing instincts of pugnacity and gregariousness.

Man's gregariousness makes him desire the company and friendship of other men, in fact makes him long for the approval of society as a whole.

Man's pugnacity makes him love the chase, the contest, the struggle and finally, the conquest.

Although the instinct to be close to other human beings is often adequately and even magnificently fulfilled in the beautiful comradeship of men in arms, it must be admitted that the desire for close relationship with other human beings is more readily and more generally fulfilled under conditions of peace.

The struggle between the will to war and the will to peace began with the human race and has not ended. In the past, the will to war was dominant but as war became more costly and more painful, as the gains for the victor became insignificant compared to the losses of life and property involved, the will to peace grew stronger in men's hearts, and now it is a mighty chorus.

Today men have changed their position concerning war and peace. They have changed because the conduct of a future war, the conditions of such a war, and its results, will be different in many respects from anything mankind has so far experienced. What are the differences between a third world war and all other past contests?

During the infancy of human history, tribe fought tribe. Later, Athens battled Sparta, one city-state against another. In the Middle Ages, noble fought against noble until the strongest ones became kings and ruled nations. Then France fought England, England fought Spain, one country against another. The areas involved became larger and larger; the losses in men and materials became greater and greater.

Within the span of a half-century, we have seen two world wars—a bloc of nations fighting another bloc with losses in life that staggered the imagination and left the world bleeding and maimed.

A third global war would embrace an even greater area of the world than its predecessors. Battlefields will be far-flung and numerous. Mankind will once more have a lesson in geography as unknown places become historical signposts fashioned out of blood and heroism. Truly, it will be a world war worthy of the name. The last two great conflicts will be so much window-dressing compared to the real thing.

The area of conflict is one difference, the degree of involvement of each one of us is another. In the comparatively halcyon days of the past, wars were fought for years and years. But a little behind the lines life went on as usual. We read in history of a Thirty Years' War and a Hundred Years' War, but we do not shudder. They stopped fighting on Sundays and had time for love. They had rules of war then, rigidly enforced and religiously adhered to, sacred by tradition and not easily flouted.

Where are our rules of war today? Where is the field of battle beyond whose boundaries there shall be no fighting? Who shall say in a future contest: There are the combatants, these are the women and children, the aged and the sick, they are not in this fight? With the Hydrogen Bomb now a reality there can be no haven, no refuge, no neutral territory. All of us, yes, all of us, will be participants in the carnage, whether we will it or not.

The next war, if all our efforts to prevent it are in vain, will be different in still another respect. There will be no definite frontiers. The enemy will be in front and behind you. In almost every country the enemy will strike from without and from within. In too many countries, the conflict will partake of the nature of a civil war.

Why will the world contest be repeated in miniature within many countries in that most painful, most deadly, and yet most long drawn out and indecisive of conflicts—a civil war? I have not said who in my opinion will be the principal combatants. But you know. The fact that you know is unhappy evidence of the great cleavage we are face to face with in the world today. And that is the clue to the fourth difference between a future war and all past struggles.

In the past and even up to the Second World War, alliances were formed and broken, depending on the expediency of the moment. In the past, rulers played the power game and wars were fought frankly for loot as in tribal times, or for empires as in the wars between Spain and England, or for national vindication and glory as in the Ethiopian adventure of Mussolini, or for markets, as in the First World War.

Wars were fought and peace treaties signed and then wars were fought again. Each time the allies were different and the enemies of yesterday became the friends of today. But now, battle lines have hardened, have become fixed and clear. The cleavage is ideological—it is Communism versus Democracy. The cleavage is wide and deep—an unbridgeable chasm. It has cut the world in two. Because the point at issue is ideological, a future world war based on this issue will transcend national boundaries. That is why I spoke of civil war. Men will not fight such a war as Americans or Russians or Italians or Chinese. They will fight as Communists or Democrats. This as I see it, will be the difference between the future war and all past military conflicts where the appeal to nationalism was always made.

(Continued on page 28)

The Battle Of The ...

(Continued from page 7)

The last important difference between the war we may yet see and the struggles of the past is that the victory of either side will radically change the lives of at least half of the world. The fight between Fascism and Democracy was such a fight. For if Hitler and his allies had won we would now be living in the nightmare of a Fascist state. In a future war the stakes will be higher. In the critical balance for us will be our economic and political institutions, our social customs, our philosophy—in short our whole way of life. The same holds true for the other side.

To summarize therefore—what are the differences between a possible third world war and all past conflicts? Such a war would involve all areas of the world and all the peoples of the world. It will be a hundred times bloodier and more horrible than anything we have yet seen. It will cut across the national boundaries, making countryman fight countryman. Lastly, its results will be far-reaching in their importance.

We do not want war. Let us, therefore, talk about peace. Let there be a total mobilization for peace as there would be total mobilization for war. But peace under what conditions? Certainly not merely the absence of military conflicts. For a democracy the conditions of peace must include above all the chance to pursue the democratic way of life and the chance to help others attain and retain democracy. Peace, for us, is indissolubly connected with democracy and the preservation of our accustomed way of life. Our government and the governments of other democratic countries will fight and

indeed have fought whenever democratic philosophy is threatened.

The mechanization of our civilization both in peace and in war is almost complete. But men are yet expendable. To maintain democracy within and to spread democracy abroad in times of peace, we need men. To fight for democracy in times of military struggle, we also need men.

Do we have these men? Yes, we have believers in democracy all over the world. But do we have enough firm believers and how can we get more? Before we answer these questions let us consider the nature of the conflict between Communism and Democracy.

This conflict is ideological. As such, the principal arena of struggle is not the battlefield, but the minds of men. Ultimately, the conflict will be solved in the minds of men.

My concern today is not with the differences between Communism and Democracy. My concern is how to strengthen Democracy. We are not choosing here. We have chosen! Strengthen the belief among men in the concept of Democracy and, peace or war, you will be united and strong.

We in this country are so secure in our traditional acceptance of this concept that too often we have allowed the idea of Democracy to become no more than a catchword, a vague rallying point. It is time to rescue the word from the general platitudes of July 4th and National Heroes' Day speakers. Democracy cannot remain a general concept. It must become specific and concrete. Democracy cannot exist in a vacuum. For Democracy to survive, it must find lodging in the minds and hearts of men, not as a symbolic word merely, but as a pattern for action. It must be learned over and

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over again. It must be lived by everyone at all times. Its cardinal tenets of rule by consent, decisions by majority rule, equal opportunities for all, protection of the rights of minorities, freedom of speech, of thought, of assembly, and of worship should be the yardsticks of every act of ours at home, at school, at work—in short, in every form of relationship with our fellow men. Thus the home, the school and society in general, have definite and significant roles to play.

Let us not consign democracy to the dead words of a textbook or to the pious platitudes of an orator. Let us rescue the concept of democracy and bring it into the realm of life. Let us re-evaluate its meaning and instead of knowing only what it means, let us live Democracy! Furthermore, let us not be content with living it. Let us make sure that we teach its essence to others, and let us insure their right to live democratically too.

To live Democracy, and it is ready for the scrap heap if it is not lived, we must not limit it to our relations with the government alone. Let the home be a completely democratic unit run along democratic lines. Let the schools and the offices be similarly run so that none of us have a chance to forget its true meaning, so that democratic practice will become second nature to all of us.

Technically we are not at war. Actually, who can say we are at peace? The cold war is a modern invention. The term itself is proof of the fact that the spoils of war will not be empires or markets but minds. Unlike empires or markets, the mind of man is a citadel that cannot be stormed or taken by force but must be wooed and convinced by straight reason and clear evidence of greater material and spiritual well-being under a Democracy. Technically we are not at war but democracies are fighting on three fronts—the political, the economic and even the military.

The political front of a cold war on an international level is intrinsically a propaganda front. Treaties of amity, foreign policy speeches, regional conferences, military pacts, treaties of mutual assistance, statements on the floor of the United Nations itself, are all moves and counter moves designed to sway the minds of men to one or the other side. Let us not forget that this is in essence a battle of ideas. Men are subjected to a barrage of propaganda material from either side enlisting their support not so much by virtue of avowedly superior force but more by virtue of the intellectual validity of either the democratic or communist position.

We are certain of the intellectual validity and the essential righteousness of our democratic position. It is incumbent upon all democratic nations therefore, in international relations, to show that the practical application of their democratic ideals results in increased freedoms for former territories, in enhanced civil rights for minorities in all nations. The democracies must seize the propaganda initiative from the Communist bloc of nations by being always in the vanguard of the battle whenever individual right or national sovereignty is at stake.

In the national field, the political front may be aptly labeled the civil rights front. We have said that a war in which the issue is Communism versus Democracy will transcend national loyalties. Therefore it is the duty of every democratic government, however sure it may be of the allegiance of its citizens, to conduct not only an incessant edu-

cation campaign to sell Democracy but more importantly to show the people that their government has enough belief in this concept to practice it at all times. Extreme care and solicitude must be taken to conduct specially those government functions which impinge most closely on the daily lives of the people, in the most democratic way possible. Incessant vigilance must be observed so that those government agencies most intimately related to the lives of the citizenry are always and above all democratic. If the home of a citizen is searched without warrant, he will think that the guarantee of civil rights embodied in our Constitution is not a guarantee at all. If the small crook is caught while the big one goes scot-free, the citizen will feel that there is no equality before the law. These citizens may even begin to doubt democracy and doubling thus, may become prey to another ideology or at best will not be staunch defenders of the democratic philosophy.

The political front is scarcely enough. The lure of Communism is most effective when it claims that Communism is based on an economy of abundance which has greatly raised the standards of living of millions of people. Can you imagine the force of such an argument? Can you imagine what hopes it will kindle in the hearts of men who have lived all their lives on a semi-starvation diet? The job of democracy on the economic front is concrete and clear. It is also tremendous! Rather than merely disprove the picture of Communist plenty, Democracy must provide fresh hope for the millions of under-privileged peoples in the backward areas of Asia, Africa and Latin America. These people have so far known only starvation and misery. They are smarting

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under a sense of oppression; they feel that they are victims of economic inequality. How can they appreciate Democracy under these conditions? Why should they not become easy prey to propagandists who promise Utopias free from oppression and surrounded by economic abundance? How can these people love political and civil liberties, freedom of speech, freedom of the press and freedom to worship one's God, when they constitute a mass of unlettered men who have neither the ability nor the leisure to read or to think? All they desire is freedom from the present chains that shackle them to hunger and privation, to oppression and servitude. These are precisely the conditions which subversive elements exploit in the face of passive Democracy.

Before men can appreciate the intangible of Democracy, we must provide them with a tangible reason to love the democratic way of life. A hungry man cannot be bothered with Democracy. All his waking hours are spent in search of a means of subsistence. A man bedridden with tuberculosis, the poor man's disease, thinks only of health and survival. Those are not our fighters for Democracy. These are the uncertain elements of our population whom we must convince to our side by adopting concrete measures to raise their standards of life.

That staunch defender of Democracy, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, gave solemn recognition to the importance of the economic front when he emphasized as part of his four freedoms—the freedom from want. What are the duties of government therefore in the economic phase of the conflict? They are to insure conditions of better health and more widespread education so that we can produce a citizenry better equipped physically and mentally. The government must at the same time provide its people with opportunities for fruitful work so that greater production and a healthy economy may insure a high standard of living and economic contentment.

Because a whole political philosophy is at stake, the military front must be coordinated constantly with the political

and economic fronts. Also because the democratic way of life is under propaganda bombardment by Communism, the soldier needs to re-evaluate his role in this fight. Today he is both a military man and a propagandist for Democracy. Today his frontline is not only in front. It is also behind. For during every military campaign the soldier comes in contact with the mass of people which are caught in the cross-fire of conflict. They see both sides. The soldier must prove his conduct that he is imbued with the spirit of democracy, that he has the interests of the populace at heart, for these people he is the symbol of government. If he is unnecessarily authoritarian he heightens the impression that the government is merely a coercive force, and he does Democracy no service.

Let me say again: Do not be content with the weapons of death. People are cowed down by force but seldom are they convinced. And we need conviction for Democracy. We need voluntary and enthusiastic support from our people, not passive and grudging acceptance. And we can have this support for democracy only if we use the weapons of life. They are age-old weapons and you know them. Sometimes they are called constitutional rights; sometimes they are called the Four Freedoms—always they mean that the government must provide for its people a constantly improving standard of life, full employment, a stable economy, better education, better health standards, and all this under an atmosphere of true freedom.

These are the weapons we must seek out from their hiding places if need be. These are the weapons which will bring you victory and peace.

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