

THE FIGHT FOR FREEDOM

by L. A. DuBRIDGE

Dr. DuBridge's 1950 Commencement Address—a timely reminder that freedom is not only an end, but a means; not only a goal to be attained, but a powerful weapon to use in its attainment.

I WISH I COULD ASSURE YOU as you leave this campus to enter upon your various careers that you have received during your stay here an education which will surely prepare you for all the problems you will face in the coming years. But you know very well that that isn't so. No educational experience that occupies but four years could do that. Even those of you who are receiving a Ph.D. after eight years of work are still of necessity only partially prepared for what lies ahead. Your preparation has been begun—not completed. This is your commencement—not the completion—of your real education.

Even if you were going out into the best and most perfect of all possible worlds, your education would not have foreseen all the possible problems with which you would be faced. Even a perfect world would be a world of change. And what that perfect world would be like in 10, or 20, or 30 years after you graduate no one could possibly foresee.

But as you well know, this is not the best of all possible worlds. In many ways, in fact, it just isn't a very nice world at all! It is a world of stress and strife; it is a world divided and discouraged; it is a world full of conflict and of confusion.

How can any education be adequate to meet the terrible problems of such a world? It cannot be adequate. It cannot even try to be adequate. All education can even aim for is to prepare your minds so that whatever problems you encounter will be a challenge which you can face with courage and not with fear.

Yet inadequate though our educational experience certainly is, we know, too, that the education we are privileged to obtain is far more necessary and far more precious in a world of conflict than it would be in a world of tranquility. In a perfectly tranquil world, education might conceivably be regarded as a luxury. In a world of conflict it is certainly an urgent necessity. For if the problems we must solve are to be solved at all, they must be tackled by toughened and trained intellects. They will be solved, if at all, not through ignor-

ance and fear, but through knowledge and courage. They must be solved by trained minds, guided by a spirit that is in tune with the Infinite.

Now I should like to take a few moments to discuss today some of the elements of the conflict and confusion in this world of today—and of tomorrow. Can we identify at least some of them so we can be clear in our thinking about them and hence, better prepared to meet them?

Uppermost in our minds, of course, is the possibility sometime in either the near or distant future of a terrible military conflict. I need not describe to this audience the potential horrors of such a conflict if it should come. Many of you witnessed at first hand the horrors of World War II. All of you know full well the technological potentialities of World War III—the potentialities which become more terrifying with each passing year. Such a war should be avoided at almost any cost.

At *almost* any cost? Why do I not say at *all* costs? There are some who *are* saying that just now. Some are saying that *nothing—nothing*—could be worse than another world war. But to most of us here in America the great words which Patrick Henry uttered in 1775 are still ringing in our ears. I hope you know them by heart.

"Is life so dear or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take, but as for me, give me liberty or give me death."

Yes, there are some things we in America value more highly than life; some things for which we will fight if necessary to preserve. And note carefully that those things for which we will fight are not material possessions, not political or economic power. They are our ideals; our ideals of liberty, of individual freedom, of justice. For them and for them only will we fight a modern war; those ideals we will defend at *any cost*.

Now I think no one will deny that our ideals are being challenged today. They are being challenged by some people in this country. They are being challenged by powerful forces abroad. It is on this front, indeed,

that the immediate battles must be fought—the ideological front we call it. On this front our weapons are ideas and ideals. If we can win the battle of ideas and ideals—our bullets and our bombs may not be needed. Conversely, if we lose that battle our bullets and bombs will be of no use, for we will have nothing left for which to fight.

Our bullets and bombs are most necessary to protect us against possible military aggression on the part of those who would rob us of the realization of our ideals. But let us not delude ourselves into thinking that ideas themselves are killed by bombs. In our proper zeal to maintain our military strength it would be tragic if we neglected or destroyed our intellectual and spiritual strength.

The Battle for Men's Minds

In the military sphere we are now in a period of an armed truce—a cold war. But on the ideological front the war is white hot. Throughout most of the civilized world, the battle for men's minds is now raging. The lines of the battle are clearly and sharply drawn—in spite of systematic attempts to blur and confuse them. The issue in this battle is clear and simple. It is the issue of freedom vs. slavery.

Oh, of course, the rulers of the "people's democracy" do not admit that they advocate slavery. In a "people's democracy" everyone can vote. Indeed, everyone must vote. But when one can vote for only one party and one candidate we call that political slavery.

In a "people's democracy," we are told, the economic system is an ideal one in which each one works for the good of all. But when all property is owned by the state, when everyone works at a job assigned by the state, when private enterprise is abolished, when labor unions and collective bargaining are no more, we call that economic slavery.

In a "people's democracy," too, there are schools and universities. Scientists work in research laboratories. But when what is taught in the schools is dictated by the "party," when the theory which a scientist may expound is determined not by laboratory findings but by edict of the state—then that is intellectual slavery.

And when in a "people's democracy" those who have offended the state are shipped by the million to forced labor camps—that is just plain slavery—period.

If there are those who would suggest that this is an extreme statement of the Communist position on freedom, I can only refer them to the published statements of the leading spokesmen of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. For example, Mr. A. Y. Vishinski in his book *The Law of the Soviet State* published in 1948 has this to say:

"In our State naturally there is and can be no place for freedom of speech, of the press and so on *for the foes of socialism*." In another place he says these freedoms "are the property of all citizens of the U.S.S.R. fully guaranteed by the State *upon the single condition that they be utilized in accord with the interest of the toilers* (that is, of the Party) and to the end of strengthening the socialistic social order." Again—"Having extended (these freedoms) to the toilers the Soviet government did not extend them to the non-laboring stratum."

In other words, over there freedom is something which is conferred by the dictators upon those whom they select and is promptly withdrawn if, in the opinion of the dictators, this freedom is misused. Now I submit, when freedom is selectively conferred—and withdrawn—by edict and is not recognized as a natural inalienable right,

then it is not freedom at all and the very use of the word is a lie.

In the eyes of the world of science, the final proof of the abolition of freedoms in Soviet Russia came in 1948 when the Communist Party proclaimed, in essence, that the freedom of science no longer existed. In that year the fantastic theories of genetics espoused by a certain Mr. Lysenko were elevated to the position of official Party doctrine. Immediately upon this announcement, a number of Russian geneticists, knowing their future to be at stake, promptly recanted and apologized for their former advocacy of the genetical theories founded by Mendel and brought to fruition by the late Thomas Hunt Morgan of Caltech. One speech of renunciation by a Russian geneticist went as follows: "From tomorrow on I shall not only myself in all my scientific activities try to emancipate myself from the old reactionary Weisman-Morgan views, but shall try to reform and convince all my pupils and comrades." Another one said, "It is necessary to understand the chief and fundamental things, namely, that our Party has helped us to effect a profound and radical reconstruction of our science, has shown us that the Michurin theory defines the basic line of development in Soviet biological science." The Soviet newspaper *Pravda* in commenting on this situation in August 1948 berated the biologists who held to "reactionary genetics" and said, "These men forgot the most important principle in science, the Party principle."

Such words speak for themselves. Herein lies to the scientist the final absurdity of the Soviet philosophy. The Communist Party is now saying in effect that if the behavior of nature does not conform to the principles of Communism, then so much the worse for nature!

The Issue: Freedom vs. Slavery

Let us make no mistake about it. The basic issue between Soviet Communism and American democracy, stripped of all its philosophical trappings, is simply the issue of freedom vs. slavery. If all the American people could realize this simple basic fact the battle of ideas would be won, for certainly no one in this country, who is not the paid agent of a foreign power, would have the slightest hesitation as to which of these alternatives he would choose.

But the Soviet propagandists are too clever to admit that this is the basic issue. They talk glibly of peace and freedom and democracy and the rights of the workers. They point with vituperation and with gross exaggeration to the defects of American democracy. They spread confusion, distrust, uncertainty, disunity. Without question, their effort to spread confusion has met with some success.

The question which we, the American people face, is simply this: how are we to fight this danger of becoming confused, disunited and weakened at a time when we should be clear, united and strong.

There are some who, in their fear and confusion, have proposed rather grotesque methods for fighting this Communist menace. They say that it is necessary to fight fire with fire, though what they really mean to say is that they are afraid freedom is not a strong enough weapon to fight slavery and that we must abolish our freedoms in our fight to preserve them.

But surely this is not the American way. It was Hitler's way. And was the anti-Communist dictatorship of Hitler any better than the Communist dictatorship of Stalin? If we are fighting for freedom, let us not be afraid of freedom. If we are fighting for democracy, let us fight

with tools and techniques of democracy. The last war proved that a democracy can be stronger, even on the battlefield, than a dictatorship. If it is stronger in the military field, it is certainly stronger in the field of ideas and ideals.

Let us be concrete about this and let me give as an illustration a current problem in the field of science.

A few months ago a British scientist who had participated as a member of the British team in the atomic energy development in this country was accused and convicted of spying and of treason. He is now serving a jail sentence imposed upon him by the normal procedures of British law. Scientists all over America and in Britain were deeply shocked that one of their members should turn out to be a traitor. If Dr. Fuchs had any collaborators in this country, or if there were any scientists or others in this country who committed acts of treason, I hope they will be discovered, tried and, if found guilty, suitably punished.

But let us remember this. Up to the present time, not a single American scientist who was engaged in any secret enterprise during the war has yet been convicted or even indicted or even seriously accused of spying or treason. Even Dr. Gold of Philadelphia, who it is alleged was a collaborator of Dr. Fuchs, was not engaged in the atomic energy project or any other secret project in this country. The thousands upon thousands of American scientists who worked loyally for their country during the war achieved a proud record, indeed. And during the five postwar years that record, in spite of many insinuations to the contrary, is still unscathed.

And yet, in spite of this record, we frequently hear unfounded and irresponsible charges against scientists as a body or against individual scientists in particular. To hear some people talk you would think that scientists were such dangerous characters that they should not be employed on the atomic energy project at all!

Now, no one claims that scientists are any better or any worse than any other group of citizens. And no one would try to protect any Communists or traitors among them if there be any. But scientists, because of their important role in the defense effort, have been subjected to selective and unjustified and unnecessary attack. This has done injustice to individuals, but it has also threatened the strength of science. And so we are weakened by our own fears and our own confusions.

And this fear and confusion threatens also the freedom of science and intellectual freedom generally. For in their confusion some people do not distinguish between the Communists and those who simply hold unorthodox political views. Loyal and innocent people have suffered and others now fear to speak freely. Does that strengthen our freedom? Does that advance or retard us in our fight for freedom?

The Responsibilities of the Universities

The universities of this country, and those who are graduates of our universities, carry special responsibilities in this fight for freedom. President James R. Killian of M.I.T. in a recent address before the Los Angeles Town Hall stated it concisely in the following words:

"We (in the universities) must oppose Communism as inimical to the freedom on which American education rests. But we must also sternly oppose the use of Communistic methods of dictating to free scholars the opinions they must have and the doctrines they must teach. Only through unqualified freedom of thought and investigation can an educational institution perform its function of seeking the truth."

General Eisenhower, president of Columbia Univer-

sity, in extending invitations to colleges and universities throughout the country to participate in Columbia's coming 200th anniversary celebration, has written to us as follows:

"... there is one principle which all free universities unflinchingly must defend. This is the ideal of full freedom of scholarly inquiry and expression, the right of mankind to knowledge and the free use thereof. For many centuries the civilized world has held that this principle is essential to human liberty, welfare and progress. Unhappily it is now being subjected to serious and systematic attack in many lands. Our Trustees accordingly have concluded . . . to ask institutions of higher learning . . . throughout the world to join in reaffirmations of their faith in the freedom of inquiry and expression."

I am sure all American universities will welcome General Eisenhower's proposal.

Freedom Is A Weapon

To the American pioneer who set out to conquer the untamed forces of a continental wilderness, freedom was a precious and important thing. More important than life itself—more important certainly than the ease and comforts of luxurious living. It was also too precious a commodity to be trusted to anyone else, either to a dictator from abroad or to a bureaucrat in Washington. And freedom was not only a commodity but also a weapon. Because men were free they could conquer the wilderness. Because they were free they could make this country a better one for their children and grandchildren.

Today we think the pioneer days are over. But are they? I believe that our pioneering opportunities have only been transferred to a new front. Today, instead of being faced with the physical task of conquering a wilderness, we are faced with the intellectual task of conquering the jungle of man's ignorance, superstition, fear and confusion. Our frontiers are not the frontiers of the forest, but the frontiers of the mind and the spirit. Our weapons are not a gun and an axe, but a trained inquiring mind and a stout but tender heart. And if freedom was essential to the pioneer of yesterday, it is even more essential to the pioneer of today. If freedom was an inalienable right then, it should be even more so today.

And in our fight for freedom it is essential to remember that freedom is not only an end, but a means. It is not only a goal to be obtained, but is a powerful weapon to use in its attainment. For if freedom is attained, the spirit of man is freed to push on toward even greater achievements. Let us not be afraid of freedom! Let us not be afraid to defend it; let us not be afraid to use it.

To you, who are about to become alumni of Caltech, the Faculty, Administration and Trustees extend their congratulations and best wishes. We hope you have learned much during your years on this campus. But we hope that the difference between what you are today and what you were when you came here will be found in more than just what you have learned. We hope that you are also better men in every sense of the word. We hope that you are not only better equipped to perform the tasks that await you, but that you have acquired a desire to perform them well and to be of service to your fellow man. We hope that your minds have been made free. We hope that you will live in a world where they can remain free. And we hope, too, that if that freedom is ever threatened you will be prepared to fight to preserve it.