

A PEACE MESSAGE

By Pablo Casals

During the celebration of the anniversary of the United Nations in October 1958, I was granted the privilege of appearing before that supreme forum. There, where the causes most profoundly affecting the human conscience are discussed, I used two means of communicating the oppressions which weigh on my spirit. And I used the same two means to restate my faith in the great gifts with which our Creator endowed man whom He created in His own image, a faith which persists despite my spiritual disquiet.

I used music and my voice to draw attention to the suffering which afflicts mankind because of the great and perhaps mortal danger threatening us. This is what I said at the time and which to this day holds the same urgency for me:

"If at my age I have come here for this day, it is not because anything has changed in my moral attitude or in the restrictions that I have imposed upon myself and my career as an artist for all these years, but because today all else becomes secondary in comparison to the great and perhaps mortal danger threatening all humanity. The extraordinary scientific discoveries of our century, which some great intellects, in their thirst for knowledge, have achieved, are now being exploited for the construction of instruments of monstrous destructiveness. Confusion and fear have invaded the whole world; misunderstood nationalism, fanaticism, political dogmas and lack of liberty and justice are feeding mistrust and hostility that make the collective danger greater every day; yet, the desire for peace is felt by every human being in the world. This desire has been manifested again and again in the face of the peril menacing all of us, by many distinguished personalities, in scientific writings in the world Press, and above all by that great citizen of the world, Dr. Albert Schweitzer.

"The anguish of the world, caused by the continuation of nuclear danger, is increasing every day; all realize the horrifying consequences of a nuclear war, which would cause not only irreparable material and physical destruction, but also moral and spiritual degradation. How I wish that there could be a tremendous movement of protest in all countries, and especially from the mothers, that would impress those who have the power to prevent this catastrophe.

"It is my deep conviction that the great masses in these countries, as in every other country, want the understanding and mutual co-operation of their fellow men. It is for the Governments and those in power to see to it that the achievement of this desire will not become impossible and thus cause the terrible frustration felt by all those who are not living in unconsciousness.

"It seems to me that all those who believe in the dignity of man should act at this time in order to bring about a deeper understanding among peoples and a sincere 'rapprochement' between conflicting forces. The United Nations today represents the most important hope for peace. Let us give it all power to act for our benefit.

"And let us fervently pray that the near future will disperse the clouds that darken our days now.

"I repeat, music, that wonderful universal language which is understood by everyone should be a source of communication among men. I once again exhort my fellow musicians throughout the world to put the purity of their art at the service of mankind in order to unite all people in fraternal ties.

"With this objective in mind, I consider it my duty to offer my humble contribution in the form of a personal crusade. Let each one of us contribute as he is able until this ideal is attained in all its glory; and let us unify our fervent prayers that in the near future all humanity may be joined in a spiritual embrace."