

# PEACE

## or POLITICS

FRANK CHODOROV

*A people plagued by assassinations, rioting, and war do well to reconsider that "peace is the business of society." "Peace or Politics" is extracted from an article, "One Worldism," by the late Frank Chodorov in the December 1950 issue of his small monthly journal, Analysis.*

PEACE is the business of Society. Society is a cooperative effort, springing spontaneously from man's urge to improve on his circumstances. It is voluntary, completely free of force. It comes because man has learned that the task of life is easier of accomplishment through the exchange of goods, services, and ideas. The greater the volume and the fluidity of such exchanges, the richer and fuller the life of every member of Society. That is the law of association; it is also the law of peace.

It is in the market place that man's peaceful ways are expressed. Here the individual vol-

untarily gives up possession of what he has in abundance to gain possession of what he lacks. It is in the market place that Society flourishes, because it is in the market place that the individual flourishes. Not only does he find here the satisfactions for which he craves, but he also learns of the desires of his fellow man so that he might the better serve him. More than that, he learns of and swaps ideas, hopes, and dreams, and comes away with values of greater worth to him than even those congealed in material things. . . .

The law of association—the supreme law of Society—is self

operating; it needs no enforcement agency. Its motor force is in the nature of man. His insatiable appetite for material, cultural, and spiritual desires drives him to join up. The compulsion is so strong that he makes an automobile out of an oxcart, a telephone system out of a drum, so as to overcome the handicaps of time and space; contact is of the essence in the market place technique. Society grows because the seed of it is in the human being; it is made of man, but not by men.

The only condition necessary for the growth of Society into One Worldism is the absence of force in the market place; which is another way of saying that politics is a hindrance to, and not an aid of, peace. Any intervention in the sphere of voluntary exchanges stunts the growth of Society and tends to its disorganization. It is significant that in war, which is the ultimate of politics, every strategic move is aimed at the disorganization of the enemy's means of production and exchange—the disruption of his market place. Likewise, when the State intervenes in the business of Society, which is production and exchange, a condition of war exists, even though open conflict is prevented by the superior physical force the State is able to employ. Politics in

the market place is like a bull in the china shop.

The essential characteristic of the State is force; it originates in force and exists by it. The rationale of the State is that conflict is inherent in the nature of man and he must be coerced into behaving, for his own good. That is a debatable doctrine, but even if we accept it the fact remains that the coercion must be exercised by men who are, by definition, as “bad” as those upon whom the coercion is exercised. The State is men. . . .

Getting down to the facts of experience, political power has never been used for the “general good,” as advertised, but has always been used to further the interests of those in power or those who can support them in this purpose. To do so it must intervene in the market place. The advantages that political power confers upon its priesthood and their cohorts consists of what it skims from the abundance created by Society. Since it cannot make a single good, it lives and thrives by what it takes. What it takes deprives producers of the fruits of their labors, impoverishes them, and this causes a feeling of hurt. Intervention in the market place can do nothing else, then, than to create friction. Friction is incipient war. ♦

## The Southern Tradition at Bay

AS RICHARD WEAVER has said, ideas have consequences. His *The Southern Tradition at Bay* (Arlington House, \$7.00), which comes to us with a foreword by Donald Davidson, is a magnificent study in depth of the "Southern apologia" which engaged practically every good mind below the Mason-Dixon line between the time of Appomattox and the early years of the twentieth century. Their ideas were in themselves a consequence of the fatal flaw in the U.S. Constitution, which took off from a theory of inalienable human rights yet made pragmatic allowance for the institution of slavery. Nobody could have ridden the two horses of freedom and slavery in tandem forever, and the War Between the States was definitely the consequence of an untenable idea.

But if slavery was a violation of the Western view of human nature, which recognizes the natural urge of every person to be the arbiter of his own destiny, it does

not follow that the South was wrong to defend the institution of States' Rights. The Constitution was a compact freely accepted by sovereign states, and the terms of ratification certainly did not preclude withdrawal if the powers and rights protected by the Ninth and Tenth Amendments to the basic contract were infringed. The War Between the States would never have been fought if slavery had not poisoned the atmosphere of the eighteen forties and fifties. But logic tells us that it was not treasonable for the Southern Confederacy to insist that each separate state had the right to deal with an institution (in this case the "peculiar" institution of slave holding) which had been accepted by the Founders as a given fact when the original contract of federation was being negotiated.

Richard Weaver does not defend the institution of slavery. But he most certainly deplores the centralizing tendencies that have made a mockery of individual and