
One Worldism

Five years ago the organization of the United Nations was ushered into the world as the guarantor of peace. It has failed. Despite that obvious fact, there are many whose faith in some sort of a superstate as an instrument of peace is unshaken, and who lay the failure of the UN to the limitations put upon it by the autonomy of its members. That is to say, they believe in peace through authoritarianism; the more authoritarian, the more peace.

History cannot give this faith the slightest support. The glory that was Rome did not prevent its parts from coming into conflict with one another, or from rising up against the central authority. Even our American coalition of commonwealths came near breaking up in war, and uprisings have all but disintegrated the British Empire. Centralization of power has never been a guarantor of peace. On the contrary, every such centralization has been accomplished by war and its career has been one long preoccupation with war.

The best that can be said of any coalition of states is that it can keep smoldering fires from breaking out only so long as none of its members can exercise control over the others. It can

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maintain an armed truce. The UN has not done even that, simply because no one state has shown sufficient strength to take control. The two most powerful members have been in contention since its beginning and are now poised for a test of arms to determine the issue. Nothing else is more certain than that the rivalry of these two powers will shortly reach the breaking point, that the UN shall collapse or shall be succeeded by another coalition in which one or the other will be on top.

The UN—it is moonshine to think otherwise—consists of two hostile camps, one held together by the American dollar, the other by fear of the Soviet army. Neither law, morality, nor ideology is a cementing influence. If the American dollar is withdrawn the West will break up, its members entering into new alignments dictated by expediency; if the Soviet power shows weakness, Titoism will splinter the Red empire.

In short, it is evident now—even as it was to any one with some familiarity with the history of alliances—that the high moral purpose written into the charter of the UN charter is but a fairy tale. World peace is not to be achieved through this monstrosity. Like the League of Nations which it succeeded, or the Holy Roman Empire, or any of the political coalitions in the history of the world, the UN is incapable of giving the world peace simply because it rests on the unsound assumption that peace is a function of politics. The fact is that peace and politics are antithetical.

When we look into the nature and substance of peace, and make comparison with the business of politics, we see how silly is this faith in the superstate. It is as irrational as the religions of totemism, animism, or fetishism. It is another magic religion, in which the hope of man for a better life rests on the mystic powers of an inscrutable authority, which must be propitiated into seeing things as man sees them. Just as

primitive man sought the answers to all his questions in the totem pole, so does modern man look to political power to solve the problems of life. In both cases we have the same flight from self-reliance, the same escape from individual responsibility, the same mother complex. That is the only way one can explain this blind faith in the efficacy of political power. The superstate idea is the most advanced form of this religion. The psychological identity of primitivism and statism is only obscured by the ritualism of charters, constitutions, and protocol.

SOCIETY IS PEOPLE

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 marketplace that man's peaceful ways are expressed. Here the individual voluntarily gives up possession of what he has in abundance to gain possession of what he lacks. It is in the marketplace that society flourishes, because it is in the marketplace 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.

Society has no geographical limits; it is as big as its marketplace, its area of exchanges. The Malayan and the American are automatically enrolled in the same society by the exchange

of rubber for a jukebox, and even the difficulties of language are overcome when a New Yorker confronts a Chinese menu. South American music became the idiom of the North American dance floor because automobiles are swapped for coffee and bananas. Society is the organization of people who do business with one another.

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 marketplace 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 marketplace; which is another way of saying that politics is a hindrance, and not an aid, to 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 marketplace. 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 marketplace is like a bull in the china shop.

POLITICS IS FRICTION

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. To cover up that disturbing fact, the doctrine of the superpersonal state is invented; it is more than human, it exists distinct from the people who staff it. That fiction is given plausibility by clothing it with constitutions, laws, and litanies, like “my country right or wrong.” A religion of authoritarianism is built up around an idol.

But, ritual does not give divinity to a golden calf. The hard fact remains that the priesthood of the state is just men, and the coercion it employs reflects its human capacities and frailties. The “priests” cannot get away from those limitations. Whatever “badness” is in them will show up in their use of force. They are not made “good” by the power to impose their will on other men.

Getting down to the facts of experience, political power never has been used for the “general good,” as advertised, but always has 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 marketplace. The advantages that political power confers upon its priests and their cohorts consist of what that power 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 marketplace can do nothing else, then, than to create friction. Friction is incipient war.

Now, if the business of the state is to cause friction within any given segment of society, any one country, by what logic

can it be shown that a world-state will prevent friction? If a small state is an evil, as the one-worlders insist, why should a big state be a good? Can an institution that is essentially antisocial be made prosocial by enlargement? No matter how high the totem pole it is not God.

Reason and fact are at great disadvantage in confronting blind faith, and those who worship at the shrine of authoritarianism will not be shaken by argument. Yet, one cannot help asking how the superstate will employ its army; the worshippers admit that an army is necessary to its proper functioning. The army will certainly be used to suppress something, to stop some people from doing something that to them seems good. For instance, there are many people in the world who practice polygamy, some who practice polyandry, and a few who go in for monogamy. Will the omniscient priesthood of the superstate use its army to enforce a uniform conjugal practice? In that case, of course, friction will result.

Or, if it is decided that the world has too much oil—the “overproduction” theory—will the army be sent to Texas or to Iran to shut down the “excess” wells? When such frictional situations are brought up, the devotees of authoritarianism answer that everything will be resolved by the “democratic” process—a process that has never stopped war.

ONE WORLD—ONE MARKETPLACE

One worldism is not an impossible ideal; but, it is not attainable through the medium of political power. On the contrary, the organization of the world into a single society—which is what the one-worlders really want—can be accomplished only if people can rid themselves of the fetish of authoritarianism. If men could come to a belief in themselves, if they

could lose faith in the golden calf of politics, if they could once reach the maturity of manhood, the law of association would do the rest. It is not necessary to plan or build a world society; it is only necessary to remove the obstructions to its growth, all of which are political and all of which stem from faith in authoritarianism.

Our own country furnishes an illustration. In the beginning, before Americans had been completely converted to this political paganism, it was stipulated that their marketplace should be as large as the country; the erection of trade barriers between the component commonwealths was prohibited. As the frontiers of the country were extended the marketplace grew apace and, in time, goods, men, and ideas moved without hindrance from the Atlantic to the Pacific, from Mexico to Canada. Therefore, an American society grew up. It was not planned; it grew. Several times the little separate political establishments set up blocks to trade at their respective borders, causing friction, but on the whole their efforts were frustrated by the spirit of free trade. (It might be well to mention, in passing, that the prime cause of the Civil War was protectionism, which is a dogma of authoritarianism.)

Let us look at a contrary example. Europe, which, outside of Russia, compares in size with the United States, is cross-checked with tariff barriers, and Europe has been a battlefield for centuries. Political particularism has prevented the flowering of a European society. It is impossible for such a thing to get going in an area darkened by passports and customs regulations. Time and again the doctors of political science have prescribed some sort of political union for the ills of Europe, on the assumption that such a union will be followed by a customs union. Quite the contrary; the borders between countries lose all meaning if the peoples can "do business" with

one another; which is another way of saying, if the states get out of the way of society. No political union can set up a society in Europe; that can only come from uninhibited “higgling and haggling” in a common marketplace.

If their senses were not dulled by their idolatry, the one-worlders could draw a sound conclusion from these two examples; namely, that the only way to a world society is through free trade. This does not mean that free trade alone would guarantee world peace, for there are other political institutions that make for frictions; but, it would go a long way. After all, if the customer is always right, how could he be an enemy?