

Freeman Views the News

There Can Be No Peace

Hitler asks for peace, Chamberlain says he wants peace, the people of Europe clamor for peace.

But there is no peace. Why?

Because peace is a condition of living which is not inherent in politics. It is the business of the State to wage war—within or without the frontiers it controls. Whether the political ideology is republicanism or fascism, communism or monarchism, so long as the State exists, and in proportion to its powers, war will be waged.

For peace is a condition of neighborliness, in which the dignity of the individual is sublimated. It presupposes that one's property is one's own, to give, bequeath, sell or use in any way that one sees fit; that there are no predatory interests, private or public, with which one must perforce share one's production. The tax gatherers and the rent collectors, the vested interests and the political machinery which assures their advantage over the producers, are continually waging war against these producers—that is, they are continuously committing robbery. Robbery and war are synonymous.

For war is caused by poverty and cannot be abolished unless poverty is abolished. Rob a boy of his marbles, but make him think that his friend is the robber, and you have the condition of war. And that is the technique which prevails in our predatory economy, and will always prevail until privilege is wiped out—until people have wit enough to know that wealth is production, that privilege is robbery.

The German cobbler and the English miner, the French vintner and the Polish farmer, all want merely the opportunity to carry on their work and to exchange their products with one another. That is peace. But in the midst of these industrious individuals there are some who have developed a scheme—the main ingredient of which is the private col-

lection of rent—whereby they can enjoy life without producing. That means that labor and capital must contribute to the living of the non-producers. The scheme is made workable by the invention of a power instrument, the State, which with its army and its courts and its political flub-dubbery, safeguards the privilege of living by other people's labor.

In our own country, where the republican system prevails, not one

generation since the adoption of the Constitution has been free of war. We have never had peace because the condition of peace—freedom from privilege—has never existed.

Nor will there ever be peace in Europe, or in any part of the "civilized" world, until the conditions which bring about poverty are abolished—that is, until the private collection of rent and international trade barriers no longer exist.