

WAR

There is only one way to describe the state of the world today — a state of war. From Grenada to Lebanon to Afghanistan to Central America, armed conflict has become the mode of relations between nation-states today. The remaining veneer of diplomacy and international law is merely a wrapping for a package of deadly weapons.

Looming behind it all are the deadliest weapons of them all — nuclear weapons. The two superpowers, Russia and the United States, along with a growing handful of governments, stand ready to raise the stakes from simple mass murder to world destruction. For all their fine talk, what they are aiming for is not control or reduction but escalation — more and worse of it — with total disregard for the future of humanity.

Why there are wars and what we can do to stop them

It is for these all too obvious reasons that tens of thousands of people, here and all over the world, have taken up the struggle against nuclear weapons and nuclear war. This is why we have joined this fight as well. For as anarchists, as fighters for the total emancipation of humanity from every form of oppression, we understand that there can be no freedom under the shadow of thermonuclear death.

But these weapons did not create themselves, nor, do we think, was it simply a matter of evil-minded or stupid leaders. Rather, we contend, they were born of necessity — the necessity of those who wield power to defend it, maintain it, and where possible, to expand it.

War is the health of the state

As long as there have been nation-

states, that is to say, armed bodies with a monopoly on power and coercion in a particular territory, they have fought each other for power, profit, and domination. To do this they have required armies equipped with the most modern weapons available. Any state which failed to do so was, sooner or later, overwhelmed.

Yet each of these nation-states is composed of classes — those people in a society whose common interests define them as such. The interests of the state are one and the same as those of the ruling class — those whose common interest is their exploitation and domination of others.

Today these two are so closely identified that they are hard to tell apart — both in the so-called “free” and “communist” blocs (which are in reality neither free nor communist).

Thus the huge stockpiles of weapons today are the result of the continuing power struggle among nations and classes, and will ultimately continue as long as they exist. This is why we reject the half-measures of those who call for “freezes,” moratoriums, or even negotiated reductions. These measures may ease the tensions for a while, but as long as they leave the present international order intact, they will only postpone the day of reckoning.

Rulers will not disarm

Furthermore, those groups who do advocate such measures — Mobilization for Survival, the Freeze Cam-

paign, SANE, Ground Zero, religious groups, and so on — to one degree or another count on politicians to bring about disarmament. Yet even a quick look at the events of the last century will show that there have been many peace conferences but little peace. From the Hague in 1899 to Geneva today and beyond, the real purpose of these conferences is to lull us into thinking that everything will be alright, that our leaders are ultimately

men of good will and genuinely want peace. Meanwhile the instruments and plans for another round of mass slaughter are being readied.

That is why we call for an intransigent anti-war movement, a movement that does not accept crumbs from the warmakers' table. Half-measures will just pave the way to more bloodshed. Let us refuse the cynical promises of political manipulators who are themselves nothing but the representatives of power and privilege. Instead of beseeching them on our knees, with open hands, let us march against them with clenched fists.

At the same time, we reject a strategy which calls for support for “national liberation” anywhere. The existence of an integrated, world economy, as well as the continued domination of the nuclear superpowers, means that no nation can, by itself, be liberated from the international system of power called imperialism. Any nation that attempts to do so will either be crushed outright

or eventually absorbed by one of the imperialist blocs.

This is why we call for total disarmament. Nuclear weapons in the hands of any state, anywhere, are a threat to humanity and a tool for one imperialist faction. Do not be fooled by those who tell you that one nation's arsenal is "progressive" or for defensive purposes only. The lesser of two evils is still evil.

No Nations, No Nukes

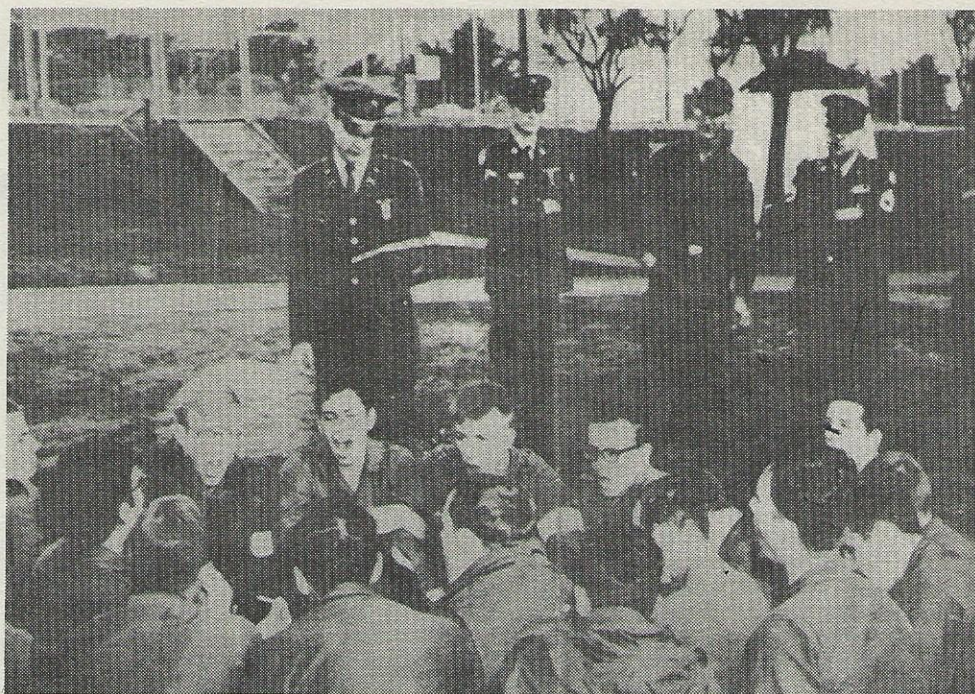
But it is not just nuclear weapons that are at issue. There will be wars as long as there are means to fight them. Thus all the State's bodies of organized violence — standing armies, police forces (both open and secret), elite guards — must be swept away. This, of course, means the end of nation-states altogether, since they cannot exist without a means to terrorize those who they wish to rule.

We reject the nation-state itself as a system of social organization. The State is slavery, pure and simple. It is organized violence at the service of a few, and a guarantee of exploitation and oppression for the rest. No state, anywhere, no matter what it calls itself, has ever brought about the freedom of its own people.

While we recognize the differences among cultures and societies, and believe in the right of all peoples to cultural self-determination and freedom, still we call for an end to nation-states and for the inauguration of a world human community. This would be a society where people governed themselves in all aspects of social life, without bosses or bureaucrats or self-proclaimed leaders to make decisions for them.

The Path to Disarmament

But none of this will come about



GI's mutiny at San Francisco Presidio, October 14, 1968. The army may be the last line of defense of the employing class but what if the whole army were to mutiny?

overnight. We need to build the kind of movement that will bring it to pass. This will not be done by treating disarmament as an isolated issue. Disarmament and anti-militarism in general are but a single aspect, though certainly a crucial and urgent one, of a general social struggle against repression and exploitation and for freedom and peace. As we stated earlier, it would be an empty and short-lived peace that left the ruling elites in power.

A successful disarmament movement should not mimic the bureaucratic organizational structure of current political and social institutions. It needs to embody libertarian principles: no self-appointed leaders, direct democracy with delegates subject to immediate recall, a federative

form where decision-making is decentralized but whose close linkages allow for powerful, large scale mobilizations. This sort of organization is a guarantee against sell-outs or betrayals. Only a movement imbued with the spirit of liberty and equality can bring these ideas to reality in society as a whole.

This sort of movement would recognize the crucial nature of class conflict around the globe, and come to take an active part in it. It would find its aims and goals achieved through a world-wide social revolution. This is the sort of movement that could end war, we feel, and we are trying to build it. Join us.

— **Libertarian Workers Group**

