

WAR WAR WAR

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

There is only one way to describe the present state of the world—a state of war. One need only look at today's headlines to see that military intervention and armed conflict have become the principal mode of relations between nation-states. 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.

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 nuclear 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 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.

We must demand total omni-lateral disarmament. Weapons of wholesale mass destruction, whether nuclear or “conventional,” in the hands of any state, anywhere, are a threat to humanity.

