

## WHO IS "WE"?

I often wish I could manage a two-day instead of a two-week turnaround time for this column following some of those cogent Progress editorials. But in this case (November 18 there is little danger that the Progress distaste for war will be an out-of-style topic two weeks from now.

There are those who suggest that if we stop thinking about war, it won't happen. Now that might be true depending on how many people "we" includes. On high school, (outside the classroom, of course), we had an expression: "Who is 'we' Do you have worms?"

Two people, or two million could form a "we" and still fall far short of including the ones who instigate war. But if "we" could include all of the people in the world, then it follows that no one would think about war and no one would remember to attack anyone or hunt for a pretext. But history contains some sad news about nations which didn't think about war, while their "we" did not include the other nation which ended up enslaving them.

War may not be so totally incomprehensible as is suggested by our Progress editorial. There are several places to look for suggested explanations. What is true of most people is that each one has looked in about one place and has come out satisfied that the particular explanation he found there is the one and only complete one. He doesn't care to look in five or six more and try out his mind on the results. Our hope should and does lie in the fact that there are more places to look.

War is an economic phenomenon. Sometimes we are told in church that it is caused by greed—your greed and my greed. I don't buy that. I doubt that greed is always present—ignorance always is. The greediest person who ever had the power to make war could have served himself several times better by using peace than by using war.

All of the major countries and most of the others today are staggering along with crippled economies, and have been for centuries. The standard school economists (of whom I remain critical) have long been in a state of confusion as to why war or inflating the currency seems to give a momentary spur to an economy. Inflation has been the attempted remedy of choice for the last few years but it no longer stimulates anything—and they don't know why. Some are now advising war because it seemed to work in 1941. Some legislators actually want the MX missiles in their home state; it will create jobs! All of this could add up to a real hotbed for germinating a war.

The building of weapons is actually just a last stage and not a primary cause. A much earlier cause is a world full of crippled economies. And a fully sufficient cause of that is the scorched-earth methods of taxation used virtually everywhere.