

by Rev. Charles C. Miltner, C.S.C.

Stratmann, in The Church and War, p. 79, says that for a war to be just the following nine conditions must be fulfilled: "1) Gross injustice on the part of one, and only one, of the contending parties; 2) Gross formal moral guilt on one side-- material wrong is not sufficient; 3) Undoubted knowledge of this guilt; 4) That war should only be declared when every means to prevent it have failed; 5) Guilt and punishment must be proportionate. Punishment exceeding the measure of guilt is unjust and not to be allowed; 6) Moral certainty that the side of justice will win; 7) Right intention to further what is good by the war and to shun what is evil; 8) War must be rightly conducted; restrained within the limits of justice and love; 9) Avoidance of unnecessary upheaval of countries not immediately concerned and of the Christian community..." These points represent a synthesis of the views of St. Augustine, St. Thomas and Francis de Victoria.

Of particular interest in our present discussion, since we are asking how the individual citizen may form his conscience on the justice or injustice of a given war are points 4,5,6 and 9. Not that the other points are unimportant, but that since they involve access to sources of information, knowledge of international law, and insight into the minds of legislators not possessed by the average citizen, it is practically impossible for him to know with certainty whether they have been verified.

But the same objection cannot be raised against points 4,5,6 and 9. For despite the practical necessity on the part of government of maintaining official secrecy on certain matters, it cannot, in a democracy at least, conceal from its people the knowledge as to whether it has exhausted all pacific means before having recourse to war. It is possible for all citizens to know whether their government has offered to submit its public controversies with other nations to arbitration or to a world conference, or whether it has shown a willingness to effect an honorable compromise with its opponent in a given dispute. Point 4 then offers the individual an objective rule for judging of the justice or injustice of a declaration of war. Similarly, though perhaps in a lesser degree, it is true of points 5,6 and 9. When it is said that "guilt and punishment must be proportionate," what is meant is that the harm done by a war must not exceed the good whose preservation or recuperation was cited as justification for the war. Now, if there is question of a world-war, one in which most of the nations of the world become actively engaged, the weight of opinion is, I believe, that far greater harm will inevitably be done than good. At any rate, the average citizen has before him the objective evidence of history on which to base his judgment. He has access to the relevant facts. Were the war restricted to two countries or to a civil war within one country, it would probably not follow that the harm done by war would necessarily outweigh the obtainable good. Point 6 is based on the common sense principle that no one can be bound to do what is futile, and what would intensify an evil rather than remove it. It may not be denied that the average citizen can form a morally certain opinion as to the chances his country has of winning a war against another nation. For here too he has access to sufficient objective evidence. Finally, concerning point 9, it is common knowledge that in a world-war, due to the virulence of modern propaganda methods and to the economic and financial interdependence of nations, it is utterly impossible to prevent "upheavals of countries not immediately concerned and of the Christian community." All reasonable doubt on this point was removed by the experience of the world-war of 1914-18. After this brief statement of principles, I shall, in a later issue of the Bulletin, attempt to draw some definite conclusions or give some positive answers to the two questions proposed.

---

Concerning the fifth edition of NO SMUT! -- "Outside" readers of the Bulletin will receive a complimentary copy of this project of the Notre Dame Student Commission for Decent Literature in the mail tomorrow or the next day. (There will be only a campus edition of the Bulletin Wednesday and Thursday this week.) Orders for the pamphlet should be sent to the Commission. The price-list is printed on the back cover of the pamphlet itself. So far the project has involved the expenditure of approximately \$2,650 and returns have been \$2,100. If, through the sale of the fifth printing, any profit should accrue it will be put to the dramatization of NO SMUT! for broadcast purposes by transcriptions. A questionnaire is now being formulated for distribution among radio stations to determine whether the radio project will be acceptable.

---