

Connections

Gonna Study War Some More

We ain't gonna study war no more. This familiar refrain—which grew increasingly familiar during the sixties—seems to have run head-on into conflicting fact. The study of war has grown apace and of the making of books on war there is apparently no end. Some of the reasons, but only some, are indicated by articles in this issue of *Worldview*.

James Rudin, Malachi Martin and David Hunter write of Jewish-Christian relations, but they do so in the light of the recent war in the Middle East. Even as they write and this issue goes to press, the terms of settlement are less than clear, the only near certainty being that no participant is likely to be wholly satisfied with the terms that are finally hammered out. The absolute certainty is that the United States will be one of the important agents in deciding the terms of the settlement. Given the tortured history of the Middle East only within the last twenty-five years, it must remain a hope far removed from certainty or even confidence that war will not be visited soon again upon the people of that area.

In his informative and detailed article on Portuguese Africa, Lawrence Nevins states that “the rulers of Portugal are committed to saving Africa from the Africans for as long as possible, and perhaps a bit longer; and the African revolutionaries have come too far to turn back.” As reports of gruesome atrocities continue to emerge from the Portuguese colonies, the arguments about Portugal's responsibilities and abilities become more harsh, more tense. The argument within the United States has not reached the peak it surely will as bills now in Congress and issues now before the United Nations are pushed to their conclusion. For Portugal is one of our NATO allies, the recipient of American largesse, the controller of African colonies and the target of articulate, informed blacks in America. It may be difficult for the black minority in the U.S. successfully to urge a boycott of Gulf products—because of Gulf's activities in Portuguese Africa—at a time when we are suffering an oil shortage partially because of our policies in the Middle East. Nevertheless some American blacks are making that effort and they have gained scattered support.

The issues, already tangled, become more so when we are told that the monies the U.S. has made available to Portugal—monies used to strengthen Portu-

gal's military forces—were the *quid* for which Portugal's *quo* was making available the Azores as a naval base for U.S. forces, a base from which the U.S. operated when it sent needed support to Israel in the Middle East war.

Out of the tangle and confusion there emerges, however, the practical certainty that the revolutions and counterrevolutions of which Mr. Nevins writes have a bloody future. And that the United States will inevitably play some part in that future, since at this point whatever it does for, with or to its NATO ally will have some consequences in Africa—and in the reactions of an attentive minority in this country.

Vine Deloria writes of another minority in the United States, the American Indian; he places recent conflicts in which they have been involved in religious and historical perspective. No need to say that the United States is largely responsible for the present plight of this group of its citizens, a group that as recently as 1954 Bruce Catton could describe—when he wrote of the white man's westward advance—as “that cruel menace.”

It is almost a relief to turn from the harsh historical realities of these situations in which the future looks scarcely more promising than their past, the pattern of which is traced partly in the blood and suffering of long-oppressed peoples—to turn from these articles to others that deal with questions of war in terms that are analytical, rational and cool. But then “cool” may not be the term to apply to the exchange between James Johnson and Gordon Zahn. Nor does Francis Winters provide much comfort or relief when he recalls John Courtney Murray's observation on traditional just war theory: “. . . I do not know how many wars in history would stand up under judgment by the traditional norms, or what difference it made at the time whether they did or not.”

From all this, what melancholy decision? That war, its causes and consequences, is too important to go unstudied. That if our achievement in preventing and limiting war remains low, our aspirations must remain high, the only alternative being capitulation to cynical despair.

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