

Lying as an Instrument of Warfare

Sociology

ARTHUR PONSONBY, in *Falsehood in War-Time* (Dutton):

Falsehood is a recognized and extremely useful weapon in warfare, and every country uses it quite deliberately to deceive its own people, to attract neutrals, and to mislead the enemy. The ignorant and innocent masses in each country are unaware at the time that they are being misled, and when it is all over only here and there are the falsehoods discovered and exposed. As it is all past history and the desired effect has been produced by the stories and statements, no one troubles to investigate the facts and establish the truth.

Lying, as we all know, does not take place only in war-time. Man, it has been said, is not "a veridical animal," but his habit of lying is not nearly so extraordinary as his amazing readiness to believe. It is, indeed, because of human credulity that lies flourish. But in war-time the authoritative organization of lying is not sufficiently recognized. The deception of whole peoples is not a matter which can be lightly regarded.

A useful purpose can therefore be served in the interval of so-called peace by a warning which people can examine with dispassionate calm, that the authorities in each country do, and indeed must, resort to this practice in order, first, to justify themselves by depicting the enemy as an undiluted criminal; and secondly, to inflame popular passion sufficiently to secure recruits for the continuance of the struggle. They cannot afford to tell the truth. In some cases it must be admitted that at the moment they do not know what the truth is.

The psychological factor in war is

just as important as the military factor. The *morale* of civilians, as well as of soldiers, must be kept up to the mark. The War Offices, Admiralties, and Air Ministries look after the military side. Departments have to be created to see to the psychological side. People must never be allowed to become despondent; so victories must be exaggerated and defeats, if not concealed, at any rate minimized, and the stimulus of indignation, horror, and hatred must be assiduously and continuously pumped into the public mind by means of "propaganda." As Mr. Bonar Law said in an interview to the United Press of America, referring to patriotism, "It is well to have it properly stirred by German frightfulness"; and a sort of general confirmation of atrocities is given by vague phrases which avoid responsibility for the authenticity of any particular story, as when Mr. Asquith said (*House of Commons, April 27, 1915*): "We shall not forget this horrible record of calculated cruelty and crime."

The use of the weapon of falsehood is more necessary in a country where military conscription is not the law of the land than in countries where the manhood of the nation is automatically drafted into the Army, Navy, or Air Service. The public can be worked up emotionally by sham ideals. A sort of collective hysteria spreads and rises until finally it gets the better of sober people and reputable newspapers.

With a warning before them, the common people may be more on their guard when the war cloud next appears on the horizon and less disposed to accept as truth the rumors, expla-

nations, and pronouncements issued for their consumption. They should realize that a Government which has decided on embarking on the hazardous and terrible enterprise of war must at the outset present a one-sided case in justification of its action, and cannot afford to admit in any particular whatever the smallest degree of right or reason on the part of the people it has made up its mind to fight. Facts must be distorted, relevant circumstances concealed, and a picture presented which by its crude colouring will persuade the ignorant people that their Government is blameless, their cause is righteous, and that the indisputable wickedness of the enemy has been proved beyond question. A moment's reflection would tell any reasonable person that such obvious bias cannot possibly represent the truth. But the moment's reflection is not allowed; lies are circulated with great rapidity. The unthinking mass accept them and by their excitement sway the rest. The amount of rubbish and humbug that pass under the name of patriotism in war-time in all countries is sufficient to make decent people blush when they are subsequently disillusioned.

At the outset the solemn asseverations of monarchs and leading statesmen in each nation that they did not want war must be placed on a par with the declarations of men who pour paraffin about a house knowing they are continually striking matches and yet assert they do not want a conflagration. This form of self-deception, which involves the deception of others, is fundamentally dishonest.

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Home-Made Liver Extract Effective

Medicine

A liver extract that will be effective in treating pernicious anemia can be made at home with very little effort, Dr. William B. Castle and Morris A. Bowie of Harvard University Medical School have reported to the American Medical Association.

This will prove a great boon to sufferers from this disease who are unable to afford the high price of the commercial liver extracts or of the more palatable calves' liver. Eating half a pound of beef liver a day soon becomes a tiresome ordeal, yet this

has been the only chance for life and health for many of the poor who suffer from pernicious anemia.

The domestic extract is as effective as the commercial ones and may be made in the ordinary kitchen by any reasonably intelligent person, the Harvard scientists declared. Only the usual domestic utensils are needed. The cost of the beef liver is practically the only cost. The extract is palatable and may be drunk hot or cold, with or without salt. It is said to taste something like beef broth.

The process of making it consists, in general, of grinding the liver, soaking it in cold water, straining, heating and restraining. The ordinary meat grinder, strainer, enamel pots, glass jars and jelly bags found in most kitchens are the only utensils required. The success of the procedure depends on the care and exactness with which the directions for the various steps in the process are followed. Dr. Castle and Mr. Bowie gave these in detail in their report.

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