

PSYCHOLOGY

Psychology Group Issues Manifesto Against War

No Scientific Proof Exists for View That War Is Inevitable or Due to Man's "Aggressive Instincts"

WAR IS NOT inevitable and not part of "human nature."

This is the Armistice Day pronouncement of a dozen psychologists from eleven universities who form the council of directors of the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues.

Ninety per cent. of several hundred American psychologists, polled by the society, join in denying that any proof exists for the view that man's "aggressive instincts" lead to war.

Society does not tolerate the settling of individual disputes by fighting.

As soon as war is declared, young men are told to kill other men, whereas we spend years teaching the sanctity of human life.

These are points made in the psychological manifesto.

The psychologists also charge that those who fight are prevented from knowing the real reasons for the war and are artificially motivated by propaganda often composed of utter lies.

"There is no psychological reason for wars to continue if we learn how to discount the propaganda of war-makers, and how to insist upon the peaceable adjustment of international conflicts," says the statement.

The statement is subscribed to by the entire council of the society, which consists of the following psychologists: Drs. Gordon Allport, Harvard University; J. F. Brown, University of Kansas; Hadley Cantril, Princeton University; Leonard Doob, Yale University; H. B. English, Ohio State University; Franklin Fearing, University of California (Los Angeles); George W. Hartmann, Columbia University; I. Krechevsky, Swarthmore College; Gardner Murphy, Columbia University; T. C. Schneirla, New York University; Ross Stagner, University of Akron; E. C. Tolman, University of California (Berkeley). The complete text follows:

The Text

"The celebration of this Armistice Day, 1937, should not be allowed to pass without a serious consideration by all Americans of the dangers of another

war. Of course everybody is opposed to war! But undeclared 'wars' are now raging in Europe and in Asia, and no one can deny that we are in a situation which threatens war.

"Faced with this grave set of circum-

stances, many people will say, 'War is inevitable; it is part of human nature to have wars.'

"We, as psychologists, protest most emphatically against the common belief that wars are necessary results of 'human nature.' This opinion is without scientific foundation. There is no evidence to justify it. In a recent poll of several hundred American psychologists, all of whom have studied the instinct question thoroughly, over 90 per cent. denied that any proof existed for the view that man's instincts lead to war.

"Not only is the inevitability of war unsound psychology; it is also a handicap to peace efforts. (Turn to Page 318)

INVENTION

Original Bell Phonograph Unsealed After 56 Years

A VOICE sounded across fifty-six years when the first successful phonograph ever built, silent for more than half a century, was played at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington.

Deposited in a sealed box in the vaults of the Institution in 1881, the phonograph was brought out into the

light of day and a record deposited with it was reproduced through a modern loudspeaker.

Descendants of Alexander Graham Bell, co-inventor, looked on as the grandfather of all sound recording devices now in commercial use was lifted out of the box in which it had



FIRST PHONOGRAPH

Silent for half a century, the first phonograph is opened in the presence of the daughters of the inventor Alexander Graham Bell, his great-grandson, and Dr. C. G. Abbot, secretary of the Smithsonian Institution.

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A person who accepts this belief will ignore practical avenues for the peaceful settlement of international disputes.

"To those who believe that man's 'aggressive instincts' cause a war, let us ask this question: Whose aggressive instincts? Those of the men who fight the war, or those whose acts lead into the war? There is a confusion of thinking here for many people. Only superficially is a war like two men fighting. When two men get into a *personal* fight, each knows why he is fighting and has the alternative of not fighting if the stakes are not worth his efforts. In case of war, on the other hand, the psychologist sees people fighting who are (for the most part) prevented from knowing the real reasons for the war, and are instead artificially motivated by propaganda composed (as we now know) in many cases of utter falsehoods.

"Even if wars were like individual conflicts, the psychologist might still ask the question: Does society tolerate the settling of individual disputes by fighting? It does not. Human beings have accepted courts of law in place of the primitive 'eye for an eye.' No one frets because his impulses to fight over property, differences of opinion, and such matters, are suppressed. Nor is any harm done to individuals by this interference. Then why should we say that because of human nature, nations *must* fight? Psychologists see the possibilities of adequate techniques which can and should be established to keep the world at peace.

"From any viewpoint, the damages of war are tremendous. We, as psychologists, note particularly the great increase in numbers of mental breakdowns, the ruin of many personalities through shocks and strains, the irremediable harm done to those who are mangled

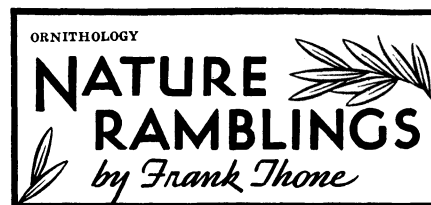
and disfigured, the devastation of economic depressions which follow war—these alone are sufficient, we think, to overbalance any conceivable benefits from war.

"But we must add to these the great loss of human values, the destruction of our moral standards, which are an inevitable part of war. We spend years teaching our children the sanctity of human life, the rights of other people to freedom of action, possession of property, etc. We punish violators severely. But, as soon as war is declared, we tell young men to kill, maim and hurt other men; to destroy homes and lay waste cities; to bomb and gas women and children. Such actions inevitably leave their marks upon the characters of these men. Indeed, we know from the post-war years that such damage to personalities was done, and that it can never be completely undone.

"War is not inevitable, psychologically. It is not part of human nature. It is fought by men who often do not know why they are fighting, doing things which are repulsive to them but which they have been told they must do. It can be prevented. If we learn how to discount the propaganda of warmakers and how to insist upon the peaceable adjustment of international conflicts (as we have upon the peaceable adjustment of individual conflicts), there is no psychological reason for wars to continue.

"This statement is issued by the Council of Directors of the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues, a national organization of psychologists formed for the purpose of studying social problems and spreading psychologically correct interpretations of them. It is specifically emphasized that this is the statement of the *entire* Council."

Science News Letter, November 13, 1937



Housing Program

WILDLIFE conservation is usually thought of in terms of big areas of land and water, under national or state administration, and with staffs of scientifically trained specialists to take care of them. A great many people have got into the notion that in such matters they may, even must, "let Uncle Sam do it."

This idea is true enough, for some species and for certain particular purposes. You cannot build herds of elk or bison on half-acre lots, and if you want to restore wild geese and ducks to the point where thousands of sportsmen can get good shooting again you will have to plan lakes and marshes in terms of townships.

But the little lives of the thickets, especially the small birds that everybody loves, can be fostered successfully in town parks and picnic grounds, along highways and railroad rights-of-way, even in semi-rural back yards. All it requires is a little intelligent cooperation with nature. Give the birds homesites of the kinds they like, and you will not lack for feathered tenants.

A surprisingly large number of practical pointers are crowded into the few pages of a new Department of Agriculture pamphlet entitled *Local Bird Refuges*, by W. A. McAtee of the Bureau of Biological Survey (Farmers' Bulletin No. 1644). Supplementary mimeographed sheets tell the best species of trees and shrubs to plant, according to the country's ten bio-climatic regions.

Tolerate volunteer thickets like sumac and wild plum; don't keep the ground mowed bare along roadsides; plant desirable food-bearing bushes where they are lacking; suppress the starved stray cat, are a few of the broad general suggestions good everywhere.

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