

PSYCHOLOGY

U. S. Has Little To Fear From Influence of Propaganda

Small Size and Character of American Audience Considered Tribute to Domestic News Reporting Here

THE United States has little to fear from the influence of foreign short-wave propaganda broadcasts on listeners in this country, because of the very small size and the character of their audience.

This is called a tribute to the confidence of Americans in our domestic newspapers and radio stations, in a report of a study of foreign propaganda and American listeners at the Princeton Listening Center, just published in book form under the title "Propaganda by Short Wave," edited by Prof. Harwood L. Childs and John B. Whitton (*Reviewed, SNL, this issue*).

A large number of Americans have tuned in at least once to short-wave programs, it was found. But only an extremely small number listen frequently or regularly. There is only a slight tendency on the part of listeners to confine their attention to the programs of a single country.

One survey of a cross-section of the population cited by the authors indicated that 10.8% have listened to foreign broadcasts, but only 0.002% listen daily to German broadcasts. Only 0.006% listen as often as daily to programs from England.

"Although short-wave reception is reasonably good in most sections of the country, it cannot compare in quality to that for domestic broadcasts," said Prof. Childs. "Nor are the programs themselves superior to those of American

stations. What American citizens see or hear in their newspapers, magazines, motion pictures, and domestic radio programs exerts a far greater influence on their opinions than anything which reaches them via short wave. The quality of domestic radio programs in the United States, especially news broadcasts, has been so far superior to anything foreign countries have offered by short wave, that there is little likelihood that any considerable number of people will prefer to listen to the latter instead of the former.

"The formal entrance of the United States into the war against Japan, Germany, and Italy does place the situation in a somewhat different light. The President of the United States has indicated that the freedom of public and private agencies to disseminate news and information will be limited to the extent of forbidding disclosures which may be of value to the enemy, and disclosures the validity of which has not been thoroughly authenticated.

"These censorial precautions, necessary as they are, will most certainly encourage foreign, enemy broadcasters to try to enlarge their American listening audience by purporting to supply the information withheld or delayed by our own government action.

"To preserve the prestige of our communication agencies and maintain public confidence in their adequacy as sources of information, it will be necessary for public officials in the United States to make absolutely certain that information withheld for military reasons is not, in fact, known to the enemy; and, in the second place, that there is never a delay in the publication of facts which listeners to short-wave broadcasts can get promptly.

"The best way to defeat the designs of the enemy in their attempts to build up a large American short-wave audience is to convince the American people that they can obtain from their own domestic stations, or in their own newspapers, as prompt and reliable news as

they can possibly get by short wave. Words will not suffice. The American radio listener must learn from actual experience that news which he fails to obtain from domestic sources but finds elsewhere is likely to be unreliable, distorted, and in most cases false."

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ARCHAEOLOGY

Democratic Civil Service In China 2,000 Years Ago

A REAL democratic civil service was instituted in the Chinese government more than 2,000 years ago, according to archaeological findings reviewed today by Carl W. Bishop, Smithsonian Institution archaeologist.

Selection of the official hierarchy in China has been by competitive examination since the third century B.C. From the first, all but a very few were eligible to compete. China's feudal system had already collapsed at this early date and, largely under the influence of the Confucian philosophy, a democratic system of opportunity for vast numbers of the people became established.

The history of the Chinese people can be traced without a break from the year 841 B.C., Mr. Bishop said. The earliest known social order was a typical feudal society. The masses were illiterate and only the sons of nobles enjoyed formal schooling. Chariot driving, a subject widely taught in the ancient schools, was a distinguishing mark of noble blood and an exclusive privilege of the ruling class.

Most of the records surviving today speak only of the culture of this class in the ancient society, probably because literacy was confined to its members. But the apparently simple picture of ancient life which these records depict is deceptive, Mr. Bishop indicated. Actually, the origins of Chinese culture were extremely complex and were only beginning to be understood at the outbreak of the present war.

The breaking down of the ancient feudal society, which in China occurred more than 200 years B.C., has no counterpart in the history of Japan, Mr. Bishop pointed out. Thus a fundamental difference exists between the two Asiatic cultures: Japan remained a feudal society, with the old class system, until 1868 A.D., while China was enjoying 2,000 years of democracy.

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