

PSYCHOLOGY

Why Germans Surrender

German psychologist, writing in military journal just before the war, called "conversion" to enemy cause true reason for being taken prisoner.

➤ SOLDIERS give up and let themselves be made prisoners because they come to regard the enemy as being right and themselves and their commanders as wrong: such is the doctrine on the psychology of surrender put forth by Dr. Leonhard Fritzsching of Munich only a few months before the outbreak of the war. He termed this mental shift under stress of battle as a 180-degree "change of consciousness," which he of course regarded as a "perversion."

Writing in 1938, in the military journal *Soldatentum*, Dr. Fritzsching described the process at some length. Not only "softies" and cowards, but even apparently solid soldiers, he said, are susceptible to the spiritual attrition that makes men drop their weapons and raise their hands. Here, according to this view, is what happens:

"The soldier goes to war and enters battle with a definite concept of foe and friend. Rearing, experience, observation and his judgment have given him a picture of his task and that of the army, as well as of the destiny of his country.

"Now physical experiences of a negative kind storm upon him, which make him acutely uncomfortable. Who doesn't know the feeling after forced marches, after sleepless nights, reinforced by uncertainty and the always-encroaching dread of death?

"To be sure, these are still for the most part purely physical events, manifesting themselves through stimulation of the solar plexus as digestive disturbances and the well-known 'nervous cough.'

"But now the forces of psychological defense are brought up. They try to explain the cause of the discomfort and thereby to eliminate it. But logical thought does not precede, and form a content of consciousness. Quite the contrary: the consciousness that something is amiss is already there, and a logical basis suggests itself for everything disagreeable, for every disillusionment and every failure.

"If the enemy shows himself superior, the cause is sought in the inadequacy of his own army, its equipment and armament, its organization and leadership. To

no one does this feeling of inferiority come so immediately and painfully as the soldier in the front lines.

"And now out of the depths of the unconscious arises the primitive idea: some one must answer for this failure; the luckless one is—guilty! And this "guilt": where can it be except with ourselves, with the leaders, with the high command, with the national government? Since the enemy prospers, as his superiority in weapons, organization and tactics plainly indicate, then he must be nearer right than we are."

Thus, Dr. Fritzsching explains, the poor bedeviled wretch under fire finally "agrees" with his adversary—becomes a kind of convert to the enemy.

His recommendations of what to do under such circumstances are thoroughly hard-boiled and ruthless: If you have fresh reserves, start a new front somewhere else, or establish new defensive lines. Leave the "spoiled" troops where they are—give no further thought to their fate. Never under any circumstances let "uninfected" troops mingle with them

—not even tanks and artillery. This advice seems to have been heeded by the Axis high command, so far as the final phases of the North African campaign are concerned.

A few of the opening sentences in Dr. Fritzsching's essay must make grim reading in Germany today, if anybody is troubling himself to turn back to them:

"To lose troops as prisoners to the enemy is the worst defeat a fighting army can suffer. For with them goes its chief treasure, the trained soldier, and also his weapons, ammunition and equipment.

"The sight of numerous prisoners raises the morale of the enemy, even of the civil population. Through observation and listening to prisoners valuable secrets may be discovered. They are useful also as labor manpower, and become important pawns in negotiations.

"In one's own camp, if the loss of prisoners is repeated and great, oppressive and dangerous feelings arise. The command loses the confidence of the armed forces."

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Cure for Gun-Shyness In Dogs Is Sought

➤ CURE FOR gun-shyness in dogs is being sought at Cornell University's psychophysiology field station or Behavior Farm. Results of this search will later be applied, it is hoped, to relieving shell-



GUN-SHY—This dog is one of thirteen animals afraid of loud noises that are being studied at Cornell in an effort to find a cure for this fault in hunting dogs and dogs of war.