

PSYCHIATRY

Not Necessarily Commie

Neither espousal of communism nor mental sickness, psychiatrists believe, are necessarily involved in signing of false confessions by POWs.

► THE MEN and officers who yielded to terrific Communist pressure in POW camps and signed false confessions or informed on fellow prisoners have not necessarily espoused communism and neither must they be considered mentally ill, in the opinion of psychiatrists.

No one knows exactly how much mental torture and pressure a particular man can withstand before he will give in to the demands made upon him, but presumably every man has his own limit beyond which his will must crack up. The process the prisoners were put through in POW camps may be compared with what psychologists call "conditioning."

The remedy is "deconditioning." In experiments on conditioned dogs, Dr. W. Horsley Gantt of the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine in Baltimore found that the best way to decondition his animals was to take them out of their cages and remove them completely from the scene of conditioning—away from all sights, sounds and smells associated with it.

If the "conversion" of the POW's to Communism was not an intellectual process, but the result of emotional pressure, lectures and arguments may be expected to have relatively little effect. On the other hand, a single dramatic incident might be enough to straighten out a man's mixed-up mind and fear of going home to friends and companions.

One colonel reported that just the sight of an old and good friend who met him at Freedom Village holding a cap with his eagle on it was enough to dispel all his apprehension and confusion.

The Communists are known to "condition" their prisoners by first reducing them physically by hunger, extreme fatigue, bright lights and constant questioning. The prisoner may be kept sitting on a stool under bright lights and subjected to constant haranguing until he is ready to sign anything. Cardinal Mindszenty was said to have been kept standing for more than 66 hours until his legs and feet were so swollen that he fell.

Men have been kept in solitary confinement until they reached the point where they were in abject despair and felt that no one would know or care what they signed or whether they lived or died.

Favorite trick of the "brain washer" is to rouse and play upon any unconscious guilt feelings of his victim. This is pointed out by Dr. Joost A. M. Meerloo, New York psychiatrist who has made a special study of brain-washing, confession-extorting techniques that are used by all police states.

The prisoner is reminded of hostile feelings he may have had as a child against a father who punished unjustly or over-strictly, or against a rival brother. Old, suppressed feelings of guilt are revived by accusations against fellow prisoners.

Under the pressure of extreme emotion, and confused by his secret feelings of guilt, the prisoner may be unable to tell the difference between fantasied or suggested guilt and a real criminal act. With this confusion produced in the mind, the prisoner is readied for the confession. He may not only avow his own crimes but may denounce his companions.

Second step in the "processing" of the prisoner is to train him to accept his own confession. False admissions are re-read, repeated, hammered into his brain. First his own statements are read to him, then statements of other prisoners accused of complicity with him.

In the first step he was hypnotized by others. In the second step he is forced to hypnotize himself until he is weakened to the point of repeating all his admissions over and over when told to do so.

In the third stage, the victim, completely confused and conditioned to accept his own guilt, is trained to bear false witness against himself and his companions.

By this time he is completely without hope, all belief in a future.

During the process of the conditioning, the brain washer may give narcotics to confuse the prisoner's mind. Stimulants may be given to prevent his escape into unconsciousness.

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GEOLOGY

Extinct Animals Roamed Alaska 12,000 Years Ago

► EXTINCT ANIMALS roamed Alaska until about 12,000 years ago, Dr. Troy L. Pewe of the Geological Survey in Fairbanks, Alaska, reported to the Fourth Alaska Science Conference in Juneau.

There were two glacial, or cold, periods, separated by a warm period in the Wisconsin age, which started about 100,000 years ago, his studies using radioactive carbon dating have shown. During each of the three periods, the last of which ended at least 12,000 years ago, the now-extinct animals, such as mammoths, mastodons and bison, lived "in abundance," Dr. Pewe reported to the conference.

The plants in Alaska during the central warm period were the same as found to-

day. It was also, Dr. Pewe believes, "a favorable time for existence of man in Alaska."

Many geologists have thought that the climate during the glacial period was too severe for animals, and that they died off then, but radiocarbon dating methods have shown that the mammoth, mastodon and bison survived the last glacial period of the Wisconsin age before becoming extinct.

Bison that have recently been introduced, "now live wild in central Alaska where winter temperatures are at least minus 70 degrees Fahrenheit," Dr. Pewe pointed out. The climate in Alaska during the most recent glacial advance, less than 12,000 or 13,000 years ago, was somewhat similar to that of the present day. It was then that the permafrost and ice wedges now found there were formed.

Alaska's mountains were formed and its placer gold laid down in the period from about a million years ago to about 100,000 years ago.

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PSYCHIATRY

Anxiety State Chief Disease of Dentists

► IF YOU are tense and uneasy when you go to your dentist, so apparently is your dentist. You are probably afraid of being hurt. He is suffering from that vague, uneasy feeling which psychiatrists term the anxiety state.

This anxiety state is the chief occupational disease of dentists, Dr. Arthur Bernstein and Jacob L. Balk of Newark, N. J., report to the American Dental Association.

Their findings come from a study of 56 dentists seen over a period of years at the Newark Clinical Group.

A state of anxiety was the most common condition found among the dentists. It was present in almost half, 42.1%, of the group. In contrast, only 12.3% of other patients at the clinic suffered from the anxiety state.

Next most common afflictions of the dentists were stomach and intestinal disorders, with heart and blood vessel diseases ranking third. In this last respect, dentists seem to be more fortunate than doctors of medicine among whom heart and blood vessel diseases take a much higher toll.

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ENGINEERING

Rocket Motor Has Tons Of Real Get-Up-and-Go

► A ROCKET propulsion motor just developed in Schenectady, N. Y., has the power of two 2,000-horsepower locomotives. This General Electric motor may be applied to aircraft, torpedoes, gliders, aircraft catapults and landing craft.

It could be economically mass-produced and works on fuels that are plentiful, developing ten tons of thrust at full throttle.

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