

PSYCHIATRY

Bottlenecks in Production of "Good Society of the Future"

May Be Achieved in Spite of Forces Acting as Barriers If Answers Can Be Found To Certain Practical Questions

BLUEPRINTS for "the good society of the future," drawn according to scientific specifications, were presented by Dr. J. F. Brown, professor of psychology at the University of Kansas, at the meeting of the American Orthopsychiatric Association in New York.

The good society is neither inevitable nor impossible, he said. Standing in the way of its production are five bottlenecks. These are principles of psychodynamics and socio-dynamics which govern man and his actions. They are like the laws of physics relating to the conservation of matter and energy. No one has been able to overcome physical laws to the extent of building a perpetual motion machine, but the discovery of such laws led to redirection of the forces of nature as exemplified by modern use of electricity.

Redirection of the forces of man's nature, Dr. Brown indicated, may come from similar study of the principles governing these forces which at present act as barriers to utopia or bottlenecks to production of the good society. These principles, he stated, are:

1. The Inevitability of Inequality.
2. The Psychobiological Nature of Man.
- 3.

The Sociological Nature of Groups. 4. The Personality of Leaders. 5. The Continuance of Resentment.

The good society can be achieved in spite of these bottlenecks, he indicated, if psychiatrists can find answers to questions such as the following:

"To what extent does intelligence depend on emotional factors? What devices can be used to make it maximal? Naturally the good society," he said, "would require as high an average I.Q. as possible.

"Does actual participation in aggressive behavior, such as combatant service in the present war, serve as a drainage for aggression or does it habituate to brutality? Records of individual cases seem to indicate that it may do either.

"Can psychiatry devise an examination which would eliminate the potentially dangerous and potentially psychotic leaders? Can psychiatry devise plans which will make the real prophets have greater honor in their own country?"

"Can resentment be eradicated and how?"

Science News Letter, March 1, 1941

Social Infection Sources

SOLVING national and international difficulties by public health methods which have succeeded in controlling epidemics of diseases like typhoid fever was suggested by Lawrence K. Frank, vice president of the Josiah Macy Jr. Foundation.

"Can we develop a viewpoint and a program in regard to the individuals who create national and international difficulties similar to that which has been developed in the field of public health and sanitation?" Mr. Frank asked.

"This question assumes that the unhappy, distorted individuals who in politics, business, industry, finance and other socially sanctioned activities, may now be regarded as the product of our basic cultural patterns and the education and rearing of children. Therefore, just as the epidemiologists look for in-

fectured water or milk supplies when they find an outbreak of typhoid fever, so in the same way we can look for ideas and beliefs and cultural conflicts which foster these distorted personalities, and also look for the methods of rearing and educating babies and children which create these anti-social feelings and drives that are expressed through and in our social life and our international affairs.

"Instead of regarding the individuals who are aggressively hostile and destructive as willful enemies of society, this viewpoint would imply that such individuals are essentially victims of our culture and our society as we are now recognizing with respect to juvenile delinquency."

Science News Letter, March 1, 1941

Hygiene Against Fascism

MENTAL HYGIENE can help the democracies stave off Fascism, Dr. Harmon S. Ephron, of New York, told members of the American Orthopsychiatric Association.

The restriction of freedom imposed on the Germans by Hitler, coming in the guise of Siegfried with the promise of freedom for 1,000 years, is greater than their previous Prussian subjugation, Dr. Ephron pointed out.

Because they were conditioned to obedience and desperately insecure, Dr. Ephron explained, the Germans were "easily duped by the political charlatany which dramatically presented the 'New Order' as Utopia; they aligned themselves with a leader who is master of the art of creating the illusion of omnipotence and omniscience. They responded to the pomp and hypnotism of a preacher of hate."

The lesson for the democracies is that they must, to preserve themselves, assure to their people opportunity and capacity for self-assertion, so that they will not feel driven to seek escape from their limitations "in terms of illusory grandeur, power and perfection."

Science News Letter, March 1, 1941

RADIO

Dr. Joseph Hughes, director of laboratories of the Institute of the Pennsylvania Hospital, Philadelphia, will describe new tools, such as brain waves, for the diagnosis of mental illness, and new methods of treatment for mental and nervous disease as guest scientist with Watson Davis, director of Science Service, on "Adventures in Science," over the coast to coast network of the Columbia Broadcasting System, Thursday, March 6, 3:45 p.m. EST, 2:45 CST, 1:45 MST, 12:45 PST. Listen in on your local station. Listen in each Thursday.

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