

PSYCHOLOGY

Politics Gets Recognition As a Branch of Psychology

For the First Time In Its 44-Year History, American Psychological Association Has Session On Politics

AT DARTMOUTH, alma mater of Daniel Webster, politics has received new recognition as a science—a branch of the science of psychology.

For the first time in its long history, the American Psychological Association, meeting at Dartmouth, has devoted a regular portion of its program to papers on politics. And psychologists attending that meeting also gathered in "bull sessions" in the evening and over the luncheon table to discuss plans for pushing research in this new aspect of the science.

A result was the formation of a new scientific society with the alliterative title, Society for Psychological Study of Social Issues. Under the leadership of Dr. Goodwin Watson, of Teachers College, Columbia University, home of so many "brain trusters," and Dr. I. Krechevsky, of the University of Chicago, the new society will act through committees of its members to seek solutions to those problems that beset modern society not alone in politics but in the field of economics and the relations between nations.

One program of research discussed at the organization meeting concerned the causes of war. How is a peace-loving nation led into an international war? Are the psychological factors most important? Or is it more due to pressure from the inexorable forces of geography and economics? Would the psychologist

agree with the economist or the physicist or other thinking men who have, however, not made a direct study of human nature as to the part man's "instincts" play in producing war?

Other investigations suggested aimed at the discovery of the present attitude of American citizens toward certain political institutions such as the Supreme Court and the effect education or information has in modifying such attitudes.

Proposed researches must have a majority vote of the society members before they are undertaken with approval.

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Democrats More Radical, Psychologist's Test Shows

DEMOCRATS—at least in Akron, Ohio—are more radical in their opinions this year than they were last year, Dr. Ross Stagner, of the University of Akron, told members of the American Psychological Association.

A survey of about 500 residents of Akron indicates that Democratic voters now differ from Socialists so little that the difference is not statistically significant, he said. They are still, however, more like Republicans than like Socialists.

A test of the sort used to measure personality was used by Dr. Stagner to

sound out the Akron voters' opinions. Each voter was asked to cross out terms on a list that represented his own dislikes. With 27 political and economic terms such as "Big Navy," "Supreme Court" and "Fascist" were included a few religious terms to disguise the exact purpose of the questionnaire.

That these voters, who are mostly factory and office workers and small business men, dislike both the extreme left and the extreme right in politics is shown by these results: Communist, disliked by 80 per cent; Nazi disliked by 73 per cent; Ku Klux Klan disliked by 90 per cent; Child Labor by 74 per cent. These were the items most disliked. Socialist, however, was scratched out by only 43 per cent.

Constitution and Supreme Court were disliked by less than five per cent of these voters, a significant result in connection with recent decisions of the Court on New Deal legislation. The decision on the AAA and the New York minimum wage decision were then new.

Women voters are more conservative than are men. The only direction in which they showed a more radical leaning than the male voters was their opposition to compulsory military training.

Republicans are distinguished by disliking Communists, Socialists, labor unions, Democrats and strikes. Socialists are principally opposed to the American Liberty League, big navies, Ku Klux Klan, capitalists, and profits.

"Dislike of the three political parties for each other seems to be about equally matched," said Dr. Stagner, "except for the strong tendency of the Republicans to see red at mention of Socialists."

The terms most heavily charged with dislike in this Ohio city include Ku Klux Klan, Communist, Nazi, Soviet, and Fascist. Dr. Stagner comments:

"The usefulness of these terms in political propaganda is easily verified by consideration of their widespread use in the current presidential campaign, applying mostly to individuals and doctrines having no connection with the correct meanings of the terms."

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