

PSYCHOLOGY—SOCIOLOGY

# "How to Sell a War In Three Easy Lessons"

## Files of Creel's Committee on Public Information Made Public After 20 Years; Governed Censorship

**W**ANT to sell anyone a war? Word on how to do it, as it was actually done by one World War agency, has at last come out. The files of the Committee on Public Information, George R. Creel's censorship and super-sales organization, have finally come to light after lying lost for nearly 20 years.

Discovered two years ago in the basement of the old War Department building in Washington, the files are now, under the searching examination of Dr. James R. Mock and Cedric Larsen of Princeton, being made to yield up their mountains of data.

The files might almost be said to furnish a model for the propaganda machine that will be set to work on the next M-Day, when and if mobilization comes. Certainly such a machine is considered a necessity among the men charged with planning America's national defense.

First publication of material contained in the files, much of it never made public before, is in the *Public Opinion Quarterly* (January), published by the School of Public Affairs at Princeton.

Revealing details on the subtle methods used by Mr. Creel and his aides in getting recalcitrant newspapers into line; how they sold America to the Allies; how Mr. Creel, one of the most bitterly attacked wartime American leaders during the war, handled his opponents; and on how the committee sold the war to America itself, are contained in the recovered filing cases.

### Reached Public

Despite the attacks on Mr. Creel, particularly when the organization was first launched, as the alleged dictator of the press, his organization was able to secure 20,000 columns of news a week. Articles were checked and rechecked, and while more than 6,000 were issued in the year and a half this super-propaganda machine operated, Mr. Creel claims that only three were ever questioned.

A measure of the stupendous size of the committee's activities can be gleaned from the fact that 75,000,000 pieces of

literature were issued. Five million copies of President Wilson's Flag Day address were distributed by the Boy Scouts alone. One of the chief techniques used by the Committee on Public Information, it is indicated, was securing the cooperation of large public service organizations such as the Boy Scouts.

Communiqués from Pershing, interviews with military, naval and civil leaders, and casualty lists constituted the chief types of material handed out. A weekly digest of war news for country and weekly newspapers, which then reached even a larger portion of the American public than they do now, was later added.

The committee was the chief medium for the issuance of news by the Depart-

ments of War, Navy, Justice, Labor, the White House, National War Labor Board, Council of National Defense, War Industries Board, War Trade Board and the Alien Property Custodian.

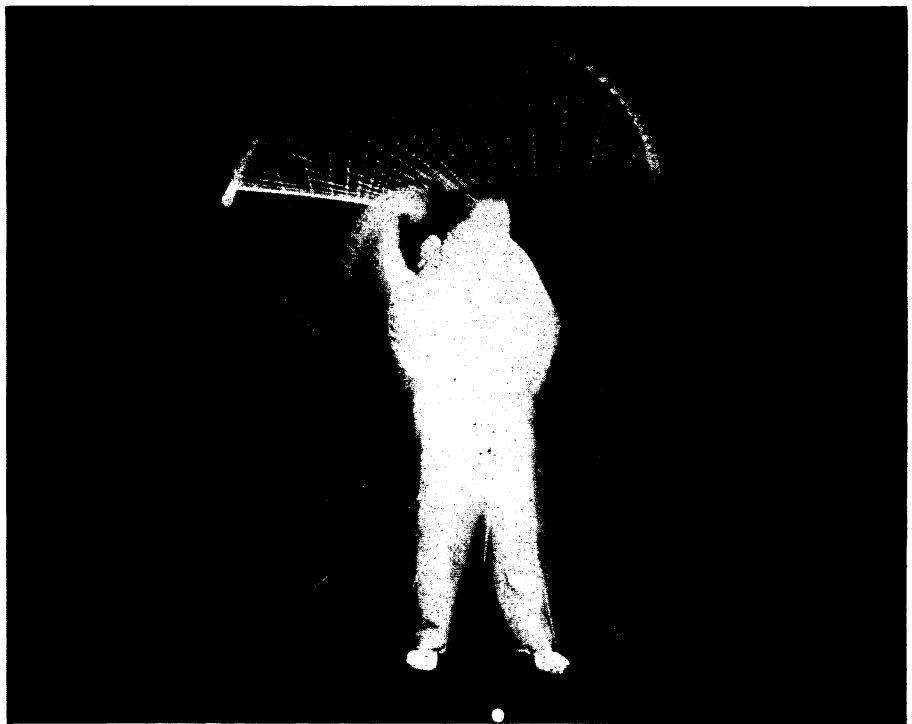
Under the committee's auspices, 75,000 Four-Minute-Men speakers reached an estimated audience of 200,000,000 people. Photographs taken by the Army Signal Corps were used; they were "possessed of the very highest propaganda value." Beginning May 10, 1917, an official bulletin was issued daily. Its peak circulation, reached in August, 1918, was 118,000.

### Compub

America's message was spread systematically throughout the length and breadth of the Allied nations by a wireless and cable service, known as Compub. The major news services cooperated in the enterprise. A mail feature service sent abroad feature items, news, weekly letters by well-known writers, photographs, cuts and mats. Virtually every country in the world was reached.

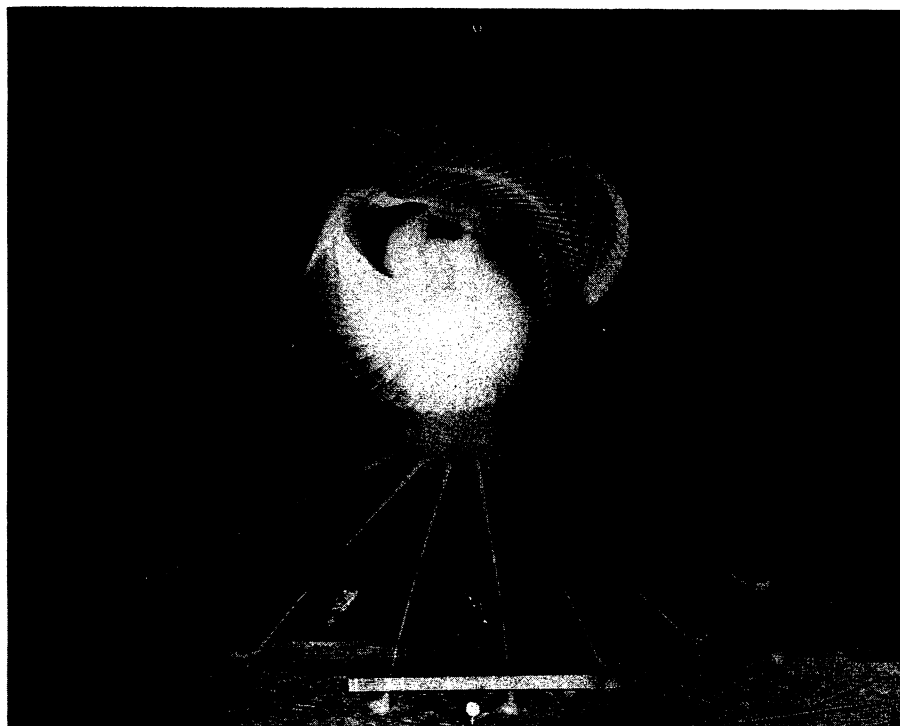
In its censorship activities, the CPI (America had a passion for initials, even then) distinguished among three categories of news:

1. Matters which must not be men-



**PATTERN OF GOLF**

*A multiple-flash photograph of the swing of a golf club as made by an ordinary golfer. The picture was taken in the new research laboratory of A. G. Spalding and Bros. with the speed photography technique developed by Prof. Harold Edgerton and K. J. Germeshausen of Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Note the trace of the ball as it flew outward.*



SWING OF BOBBY BURNS

This picture, made with a longer, wooden golf club shows how much flatter is the golf swing than is the view, on the opposite page, of the swing of an iron. This photograph showed that: ball velocity is 225 feet a second, club velocity before impact is 166 feet a second, club velocity after impact is 114 feet a second.

tioned in print. These included ship and troop movements, location of mine fields, photographs of harbor defenses and the like.

2. Matters of doubtful nature which must be passed on first by the committee. For example, Army and Navy units might be described if nothing of use to the enemy was contained in the description.

3. Matters unrelated to the war.

No such hard-and-fast censorship as characterizes many lands today was ever laid down by the committee. Rather Mr. Creel appeared to depend on his powers of persuasion to keep newspapers in line. Dr. Mock and Mr. Larsen and history as well testify that he succeeded.

*Science News Letter, January 21, 1939*

PUBLIC HEALTH

## Warns Against Poison Hazard In Rayon Manufacture

### Carbon Disulfide Poisoning Causes Emotional Upsets, Loss of Memory, Mania, as Well as Physical Symptoms

**W**ARNING that carbon disulfide poisoning threatens the mental and physical health of workers in certain departments of rayon factories appears in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. (Jan. 7)

More than 50,000 Americans are now engaged in this trade, but not all are ex-

posed to the hazard of carbon disulfide poisoning. Facts about this particular industrial health hazard were uncovered in an examination, by specialists of the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine, of 120 men employed in Pennsylvania factories where the artificial silk is made.

Three-fourths of the men examined showed early symptoms of the toxic effects of carbon disulfide, the poison used in the manufacturing process.

The men were employed at the time of examination in the two departments in which carbon disulfide is present in greatest quantity. Here are some of the symptoms found:

More than 70 per cent. showed psychic disturbances varying from extreme insomnia to uncontrollable anger with rapid changes of mood, marked memory defects and in some instances psychoses, usually of maniacal type. Loss of sexual desire was found in 75 per cent. of the men under 45 years of age.

Seventy-five per cent. of the men suffered pain that was followed later by weakness and partial paralysis.

Fifty-four per cent. showed disturbances of the eye; 71 per cent. showed impaired hearing.

In severe cases of carbon disulfide poisoning, such as have been frequently reported in the medical literature from abroad, paralyzes develop, there is temporary blindness, perhaps acute hallucinatory psychoses, impotence, emaciation and cachexia.

The *A.M.A. Journal* calls the attention of physicians to a bulletin, issued by the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry, which gives the facts uncovered in the story.

*Science News Letter, January 21, 1939*

BIOLOGY

## Man's Egotism Shattered by Life's Thin Film on Earth

**O**NE of the most important philosophical consequences of the rise of science through the centuries is the demolition of the man-centered universe. Copernicus dethroned the earth as the center of the universe. Darwin made man take his rightful place in the grand procession of natural evolution.

Ego-centered man, so powerful in shaping the things of the earth to his own ends, needs to be reminded occasionally of his role in space and time. The earth, so far as we are sure the only oasis of life in the myriad of stars and nebulae, is a minor satellite of a mediocre star, remarkable only because we chance to be on it.

And life is by no means a function of the whole earth. Dr. Oscar Riddle, Carnegie Institution biologist, has described the kind of world picture as interpreted by the life sciences that he feels our schools should present.

"The drama of life," Dr. Riddle says,