

PSYCHOLOGY

Propaganda Protection Needed In the United States Today

Expert Replying to Science Service Inquiry Declares
American People Already Mentally Prepared for War

War of nerves—war of propaganda. Call it what you will, we in America are to experience the powerful backwash of the European conflict. What we need is psychological protection. What is likely to happen to us, in the opinion of psychological experts: The American people are already mentally prepared to accept war and to accept the fact that sooner or later they will be drawn into it. Propagandists will capitalize on the recent depression by suggesting that through playing the war game we can win back prosperity. The mental effects of war would be as disastrous as the maiming and lethal results of high explosives. Free speech and free press will be lost. Faith in democratic processes will give way to a following of a strong military leader. International hatred will be cultivated and minority groups, including labor organizations, will be persecuted. Mental disease, neuroses, and twisted personalities will develop on a frightfully increased scale. The values and ideals of civilization will be crushed. Fear and horror will rule the world despite the attempts of propagandists to artificially deaden these human emotions.

Science Service has queried leading psychologists in the field of social problems on new methods of propaganda likely to be developed in a new European War and new methods of combatting it. We also asked what would be the effect of such a catastrophe on the mental state of the people of both warring and neutral nations.

PSYCHOLOGY

Official Reasons For War Are Seldom Real Causes

By DR. I. KRECHEVSKY

Secretary, Society for the Psychological
Study of Social Issues

THE PRESENT conflict in Europe is not that of democracy versus fascism. It is the final tragic chapter in the politics of power and profits which has dominated the world for more than half a century, but psychologists know well that the official reasons for war are seldom the real causes.

Propagandists knowing that the American people are sincerely anti-fascists will raise the slogan of democracy versus fascism. England and France will be glorified as democracies and thus clever appeals to our highest ideals will be used in the hope that our baser emotions of

aggression will be released with the result that we will be ready to stampede into a war for "democracy" and "do our bit."

Also an attempt will be made to take advantage of our previous economic plight and propagandists will suggest that through playing the war game we can win back prosperity.

The group opposed to our participation in such a war will no doubt attempt to publicize the real issues involved. They will remind the American people of the old slogan used in the last war and will offer a more positive and constructive program for economic security in this country. Such anti-war propaganda will also have to recognize our democratic sympathies and show that by defending and extending democracy and peace at

home, the American people will be working most effectively for democracy the world over.

Science News Letter, September 9, 1939

PSYCHOLOGY

War Interrupts Natural Activities of Living

By DR. FRANKLIN FEARING

Professor of Psychology, University of
California at Los Angeles

THE SITUATION at present is psychologically not the same as in 1916. Constant familiarity with activities of fascist countries has already mentally prepared the American people to accept war, and to accept the fact that sooner or later they will be drawn into it.

The last Gallup poll shows that 76% of the people believed that in event of a European war, we will be involved.

Counter propaganda is not likely to be effective.

The mental effects of war are extremely complex. Among the more important is a loss of faith in democratic processes and an increase in belief that a strong man at the top can save us.



TEST FOR HIGH FLYING

The high altitude tank at the Mayo Clinic's new aviation medicine research laboratory at Rochester, Minn. Such effects as lack of oxygen on the human body and mind, and such questions as how fast can a man descend comfortably and safely can be studied in this tank which, by low pressure, simulates upper air levels. Here a research worker wears an oxygen mask invented by three of the men responsible for this laboratory, Drs. Walter M. Boothby, W. Randolph Lovelace and A. L. Bulbulian. Oxygen is necessary at altitudes above about 9,000 feet.