

PSYCHOLOGY

# Ten Commandments Offered For Propaganda Protection

## Psychologist Experts in This Field Issue Warning And Suggestions for a Psychological Armor

**B**EFORE the great guns, the torpedoes and the bombs went into action in the European war, propaganda battles were already being won and lost in the minds of men the world over.

The present "no-man's land" where greatest propaganda activity is focussed may very well be in American homes. Psychologists in the United States are concerned over the paradoxical condition which causes Americans to say that they do not want war but at the same time feel that they will be drawn into it against their will.

The American citizen, they conclude, needs psychological armor against the bombardment of propaganda from interested sources the world over.

Here are ten commandments of propaganda protection. They are based on a warning issued by the Council of the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues, a scientific organization of leading social psychologists.

It is suggested that you paste them up over your radio and keep them in mind as you hear or read dispatches from warring nations.

1. Don't think in terms of "good" nations and "bad" nations. Psychologists know that no people are completely good and others completely evil.

2. Don't think of nations as individual persons. Germany is not Hitler, Poland is not Paderewski, England not Chamberlain or Queen Elizabeth.

3. Don't think of governments as having personalities. Governments cannot

demand loyalty, or determine policy, or explain actions. Certain government officials do these things. In the United States, the government lies with the citizens and you are one of them.

4. Don't forget to keep your skepticism sharp. True facts are hard to discover, especially amid the confusion and emotionalism of war.

5. Don't listen to or accept one side exclusively. Remember that there are always two sides to every question.

6. Don't accept the official explanations of the propaganda agencies of bel-

ligerents. Psychologists know well that diplomats may rationalize their actions to make them seem completely right and proper. The true reasons behind such actions are not always made public.

7. Don't trust appeals to your ideals—that you must "fight for humanity," to "keep the world safe for democracy," to "stamp out" something evil. Propaganda, psychologists know, is never directed openly at the base in us. Propagandists would rouse our hate and at the same time make us think we are being noble.

8. Don't trust emotional phrases. Now is the time to be ruled by your head not your emotions.

9. Don't believe statements that "war is inevitable" or "demanded by human instincts."

10. Don't allow yourself to be emotionally stampeded into giving up free speech, civil liberties and even your personal individuality and mental health. That is the price that war may demand.

*Science News Letter, October 14, 1939*

GEOGRAPHY

# Aland Islands in Baltic Are Another Gibraltar

**T**HE ALAND ISLANDS, named by some forecasters as Europe's next likely trouble spot, are the Gibraltar of the Baltic.

Long a bone of contention among neighboring countries, the Alands rise out of the sea 15 miles west of Finland and 25 miles east of Sweden. Incidentally, the name Aland is pronounced either Oh-land or Au-land.

Now a part of independent Finland, the islands in the past have been shifted, along with Finland, from Swedish to Russian rule. When Finland gained independence in 1917, an Aland Island

situation arose, due to the majority of the islanders being of Swedish descent and voting to secede and go with Sweden rather than remain with Finland. It took the League of Nations council and a special commission to smooth out the tension and establish the islands as part of Finland, giving them virtually autonomous government.

Highly desirable as a military base, the islands have remained unfortified except for one brief interlude in their history. The League of Nations convention in 1921, which gave them their present status, forbade militarization.

With Russia and Germany both interested in dominating the Baltic, the islands are a natural focussing point of interest. Eastward, they command the Gulf of Finland, and the possessor of the islands could bottle the Russian fleet in its Kronstadt base. Westward, they command the entrance to the Gulf of Bothnia between Sweden and Finland. Guns trained that way would make it very dangerous for ships unfriendly to the islands' possessor to carry cargoes toward Germany. Harbors of the islands offer excellent bases and hiding places.

*Science News Letter, October 14, 1939*

## SCIENCE NEWS LETTER SUBSCRIPTION COUPON

To Science News Letter, 2101 Constitution Avenue, Washington, D. C.

Start my subscription to SCIENCE NEWS LETTER for  1 year, \$5  
 Renew  2 years, \$7

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_

City and State \_\_\_\_\_

(No extra postage to anywhere in the world)