

PSYCHOLOGY AND THE SOLDIER *)

When the United States entered the war of 1917, the task of training millions of citizens who knew little English because they were Teutons, Semites, Latins, Slavs, and Orientals, was so great that the government was forced to consult psychologists--men whose business it is to solve problems concerning human beings.

Hence, a month after the United States entered the war, the Department of Military Psychology adopted a detailed program at Camp Greendale to develop a "wholesome mental attitude towards the service, to make induction to it as pleasant and profitable as possible."

Norman Copeland, in his book "Psychology and the Soldier", proceeds to tell what the psychologists did about the situation and what they learned that can be applied in this war.

The psychologists knew that "leadership is more economical and efficient than drivership"; they knew that Napoleon was right when he said, "Moral force to the physical is as three to one," so, according to Copeland, they work on the principle that "everything must be done that can be done to bring assurance and encouragement" to the men in the armed forces.

Under the subject of "Leadership," when advocating that the officers take a personal interest in the men under their command, Copeland quotes Alfred Adler directly: "It is the individual who is not interested in his fellowmen who has the greatest difficulties in life and provides the greatest injury to others. It is from among such individuals that all human failures spring."

Again in cautioning against criticism, Copeland quotes, "The deepest principle in human nature, says a famous psychologist, is the craving to be appreciated." (Could that psychologist be Alfred Adler?) Copeland adds from his own store of knowledge, "Criticism may relieve the feelings of the critic, but no matter how justified it may be, it can arouse only resentment and dis-

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couragement in the person who is criticized. Appreciation, on the other hand, stirs a man to give of his best.

When dealing with the subject of Fear, the book says that each individual has his own private list of fears, but that as soon as a nation goes to war a new set of fears is aroused and the efficiency of the army depends chiefly upon the efficiency of the methods by which the instinct of fear is controlled. Giving the troops knowledge of all facts relating to their situation--the worst as well as the best--is one way. Discipline, "the natural antidote to fear," is another, for while a badly disciplined army exhibits all the weaknesses and dangers of a crowd, in a well-disciplined army "each individual is secure in the knowledge that every one of his comrades is as one with him, and not only constantly by his side and helping him, but at all times ready to come to his immediate aid.

Copeland follows the Adlerian school of thought on the question of sex. Speaking as always for the psychologists, he urges chastity in the army or anywhere else unless the sex unions indulged in carry responsibility along with their privileges. And to the layman's argument that our instincts were given us to use, that there is danger in suppression, Copeland quotes Dr. Hadfield, "If this principle holds good with the sexual, why not with the other instincts? The soldier, at the first burst of a shell, deserts his post and runs away. He is tried by court martial and pleads 'natural instinct'. On hearing his defense, the Brigadier rises and shakes hands with him, saying, 'I congratulate you, my dear fellow, on having the courage of your convictions in resisting the foolish conventions of this mid-Victorian sergeant major.' Another man, annoyed at being pushed in a crowd, strikes the innocent passer-by to relieve his pugnacious instinct. The rest of the onlookers take his side and praise him for daring to be natural in giving vent to his feelings, one being heard to remark that 'our instincts were given us to be used, not to be repressed'. Again, the known thief found in a bank at night is exonerated from all blame, and receives the apology of the bank manager, on the ground that he was exercising his instincts of curiosity and acquisition. What a world we should live in!"

Many other subjects such as Morale, Ideals, Team Spirit, Prestige, Personality and Speech, and Care of Men are dealt with in this book. Illustrations from English and American military experience clarify the subject matter, and always the attitude is maintained that it is essential to treat each individual with courtesy so he may feel a sense of dignity. "Men with a sense of dignity will work harder, give less trouble, and fight better than men with none."

Maybe it is this attitude which caused R.E. Dupuy, when he reviewed the book in Saturday Review of Literature to call it a "stuffy little volume better suited to a Sunday School than as a guide to a young leader of fighting men engaged in the serious business of killing other men before they themselves are killed."

When shall we learn that the same rules apply in training men, whether it be for life or for death?

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