

The Wartime Social Survey

ONE of the most recent developments in State research in the field of sociology is the Wartime Social Survey. After an initial period of growing pains, this Survey is now emerging as a valuable machine for conducting any type of inquiry capable of investigation by the method of interviewing samples of the population. Two Government Departments, the Ministries of Information and Food, required a market research machine for investigating the effects of their advertising. When the Wartime Social Survey was set up to meet this need, it became apparent that there were problems facing other Government Departments which could only be solved by the method of interviewing samples of the population, and to meet this need the Survey was extended. It now carries out investigations for not only the Ministries of Information and Food, but also for the Board of Trade, the Ministries of Health, Home Security, Works and Buildings, Supply and the War Office.

With the exception of its superintending research officer, none of its staff are Civil servants. This is one of an elaborate series of precautions adopted to make sure that the names of the persons interviewed are not available to the Civil Service. The headquarters staff consists of eight scientific workers, a number of coding tabulators, administrative officers, etc., while the interviewing staff consists of about fifty field-workers. So that this level of scientific work shall be as high as possible, a small panel of scientific consultants has been set up. They are Prof. A. M. Carr-Saunders, Prof. L. T. Hogben, Mr. B. Seebohm-Rowntree, Mr. A. D. K. Owen, Dr. Bradford Hill, and Dr. Aubrey J. Lewis. Every report produced is submitted in interim form to the consultants for critical comment before the final draft is prepared. Further, technical problems in the phrasing of questions, the selection of samples, etc., are submitted, particularly when any difference of opinion arises between a requesting Department and the scientific staff of the Survey. Owing to the speed at which war-time investigations have to be carried out, more detailed consultation is impossible, but the present system has shown that the needs of Government Departments for social survey investigation can be met by a Government-controlled machine without loss of scientific impartiality. Among studies recently undertaken are: the feeding of employed adolescents; the methods of heating and cooking in working-class households; salvage habits; clothes-rationing problems; food-rationing problems; and a study of female foundation garments. It will be noted, of course, that this useful Survey is dealing with problems arising out of the War.

Nazism and Science

IN a recent Thinker's Forum pamphlet entitled "The Nazi Attack on International Science" (London: C. A. Watts and Co., Ltd., 6d.), Dr. Joseph Needham presents a brief but telling analysis of the nature of Nazism, and describes some of the effects it has produced in science and learning both inside Germany and outside. Society is now passing through an era of change from individualistic capitalistic economics to some form of collectivism, and just as the earlier change from a feudal aristocracy to capitalist democracy was marked by violent upheavals such as the Thirty Years' War and the French Revolution,

so Dr. Needham believes that Nazism and Fascism are by-products of the present phase of the evolution of society. The necessary conditions are two powerful groups between which there are relations of mutual fear; and the racketeer, in this case the Nazi, plays off one against the other. The Nazis have played this part successfully with the German people and also with other nations. Having attained power, the Nazis had to have "a nation of tools". This they achieved by the doctrines of anti-intellectualism, racialism, restriction of science to matters of military value, and the principle of the 'leader'. Incidentally, Dr. Needham points out that the war between China and Japan has its origin in a similar racial-national spirit which has arisen in the latter country.

Turning to biological fallacies exploited by the Nazis, Dr. Needham refers particularly to their misuse of the doctrine of the struggle for existence; they overlook the distinction between inter- and intra-specific competition, forgetting that the latter has led to the development of unwieldy size, exaggerated fertility and other characteristics which in the past have brought about the extinction of the species concerned. They also make play with the analogy between the social organism and the animal body with its various organs or members. But associations of organisms capable of rational thought cannot be regarded as associations of living cells having only the primitive characters of life. It is a fundamental mistake "to suppose that higher levels of organization can be explained and handled in terms of lower levels". Dr. Needham recapitulates the facts already known about the repression of learning in Germany and the occupied countries, the dismissals of staff and their replacement, if at all, by political figures. One example of the effect of repression on scientific publications quoted by Dr. Needham is worth mention. Three scientific journals in his own field of work were, even before the War, one fifth or less of their former size; one of these, the *Biochemische Zeitschrift*, decreased from 13 volumes in 1927 to 5 in 1938 and 2 in 1939, although the number of non-German contributors remained roughly the same. Science in Nazi Germany is valued solely in its relation to the needs of war.

British Electrical and Allied Industries Research Association

THE twenty-first annual report (Ref. E.R.A./T320) of the British Electrical and Allied Industries Research Association summarizes the work which has been carried out during the year ended September 30, 1941, and lists by titles the various research reports which have been issued during the period. The work is reviewed in seventeen major classifications among which are the highly important ones of dielectrics, cables and overhead lines, electric control apparatus, steam-power plant and condensers, magnetic materials, transformers, surge phenomena and rural electrification. Emphasis is laid upon the work which is still being carried out on circuit making and breaking, surge phenomena, and the properties of insulation, and attention is directed to the consideration now being given, for example, to the storage of electrical energy, the mechanical strength of transformer windings, and the quality improvement of electrical sheet steel. Practical circuit breaker design has been influenced considerably by the Association's investigations. In the