The Role of the Psychologist in International Affairs

Otto Klineberg

In 1943, when Kurt Lewin and I were both doing war work in Washington, we talked once over dinner about the study of national characteristics, a topic which had begun to interest me seriously about that time. I asked him whether he thought the results of his early work on German children would hold also for the United States. He thought they would, but he was quick to admit the value of cross-cultural comparisons in this and other fields. He went on to suggest that there should be a great deal more international cooperation in psychological research, although he anticipated certain difficulties due to different national orientations. We both expressed the hope that there would be real developments in an international direction after the war was over. It is to these developments that I now turn.

* * * * *

This paper is in part written, explicitly or by implication, in the first person singular. Fortunately for me, Gordon Allport (1) a number of years ago made a good case for the admissibility of the personal document into psychological science; if I decide, in his words, to be "idiographic" instead of "nomothetic," I have at least some justification for this poly-syllabic choice. The available literature on my topic, "The Role of the Psychologist in International Affairs," is not abundant, and the role of which I am writing has not been fully defined. It is an emergent, a relatively new phenomenon. It is true that a number of psychologists have written about international affairs, but it is only recently that they have been allowed, although within fairly circumscribed limits, to become more directly involved in them. Since there appears to me to be a good possibility that such involvements may increase in the future, both in scope and in depth, I am making this attempt at definition.

I have spoken of this as a personal document, yet it cannot be entirely personal. A role is of course a set or pattern of expected behaviors associated with a status or a social position, not with a single individual. What I should like to do, therefore, with your permission, is to analyze some personal observations, in order to see which of them can be generalized with some degree of probability. I begin with what might be called in this context a credo, with what I believe; on that basis, I may possibly be able to make a start toward the formulation of a credendum, a system of principles which will represent the beliefs of many of us. After all, reference has been made to my quarter-century of identification with psychology.
(it is actually somewhat longer than that), so perhaps I may be forgiven if I make a noise like a would-be elder statesman.

In what follows, I shall rely heavily, though not exclusively, on my own experience in Unesco—the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization. There are six major departments in Unesco—Education, Natural Sciences, Cultural Activities, Mass Communication, Technical Assistance, and Social Sciences—as well as a Service of Exchange of Persons, which administers the Fellowship Program. The Department of Social Sciences, which includes social psychology, has a Division of Applied Social Sciences, with which I was connected from 1953 to 1955. I was also in Unesco from 1948 to 1949, succeeding Hadley Cantril as Director of the “Tensions Project.” Many psychologists have been involved in international activities, directly or indirectly, under Unesco auspices or independently; I shall make reference to these, but with the proviso that my survey is not complete.

* * * * * * *

Remaining within the framework and vocabulary of role theory, I should like first to draw attention to several possible areas of role conflict for the internationally-minded psychologist. (It may be that not all of these are role conflicts in the technical sense, but they do appear to function as such.) The first of these refers to the stand that must be taken with regard to a system of values. Psychologists have long been concerned with values; they have studied them, measured them, classified people on the basis of predominant value systems; related them to sex, ethnic origin and occupational choice; examined their influence on perception and memory. In a sense, all attitude research is value research; we may recall that as far back as 1918, Thomas and Znaniecki (20) defined attitude as “a state of mind of the individual toward a value.” Our position has been in general that of course we must examine values objectively and scientifically, discover their origins and their effects, but we must avoid having any ourselves, at least in our role as psychologists. We have sometimes added that as human beings we have a right to values, but not as scientists. Some of us have remained uncomfortable, however, in the face of the resulting schizophrenia.

Ours is not the only discipline which has had to face this problem. We are all familiar with the soul-searching of many atomic scientists who have been concerned about the practical implications of their discoveries. Recently an anthropologist, Nadel (14), has discussed the same issue, and has concluded that values cannot be eliminated. He quotes with approval the statement by Morris Cohen that “we are . . . consistently passing value judgments . . . when we speak of things as normal or abnormal, the average man, and especially when we use the term ‘pathological.’” Nadel adds: “My point is that in the study of society we can ‘eject’ values least of all” (page 53). It appears to be true that even the most objective cultural relativist, although retaining his equanimity in the face of the pot-
latch, premarital excursions, and even some of the more drastic rites de passage, feels just a little uncomfortable when faced with infanticide, cannibalism, and the insatiable appetite of Aztec gods for human hearts.

The international psychologist (this has a rather sinister sound, like international banker; perhaps I can think of a less loaded expression) certainly adopts a set of definite values. For him, international cooperation is better than conflict, peace better than war; he is in favor of a higher standard of living, a lower death rate, universal education, although he would like these introduced with as little disruption as possible of indigenous cultures; he is against ethnic prejudice and discrimination; he supports women's claim to equality. He must accept these and similar values because they are built into the constitutions of the organizations which constitute the United Nations family, and he would be out of place in that family if he felt otherwise. Also, I think he would be almost bound to value democracy above dictatorship even though he may have to work with people who do not share that view. Psychology is after all that discipline which is most directly concerned with the individual, attaching importance to the individual as an agent, an organism which acts, which does not merely reflect the influence of external stimuli, but selects, excludes, interprets, or even distorts those stimuli in line with previous experience or idiosyncratic needs. I wish there were an opportunity for discussion of my paper, because I should have liked to have your comments on the following proposition, namely, that psychologists, because of their professional training, would be among the persons least likely to accept a system which denies the significance and reality of the individual. In that sense, psychologists who have given or who now give their support to authoritarian ideologies are not good, that is, not competent, psychologists. The same may very well hold for other "human sciences" as well, but my present concern is with psychology. This may be just a little irrelevant, however, to my emphasis on values which are more particularly applicable to those members of our profession who commit themselves to an international role.

There is a second variety of role conflict which may be somewhat more difficult to resolve. The psychologist in an international organization is subject to two sets of contrasting pressures. On the one hand, there is the pressure toward action, getting something done, helping the administrators of practical programs reach their goals, advising them, for example, on how to improve the status of women in the Near East or resolve the conflicts between Hindus and Moslems in India. On the other hand there is pressure toward scientific caution, toward going slowly until we are sure of where we are going, toward research and still more research before we commit ourselves to action.

This conflict is a real one. It is perhaps natural that we should feel somewhat helpless in the face of the complexity and scope of international programs, when we consider the professional tools which are at our disposal. "Patience," we say to our action-minded colleagues, "the social
sciences are young; give us time.” But patience is what nobody has, neither our colleagues in the United Nations or Unesco, nor the 76 nations which send their representatives to the Unesco General Conference, and which need to be assured of the practical results which will persuade them to continue their annual contributions. Since literacy is good, there is agreement that the program of the Department of Education is practical, and that additional projects should be supported. Since international contacts are good, there is no argument about whether Exchange of Persons should be encouraged. These are things which Unesco does. It also publishes books and articles, and this is precisely the field in which the name of the Social Sciences Department “leads all the rest.” There is considerable doubt, however, as to whether even a good book is as practical as a new school or an additional fellowship. The psychologist, together with his colleagues in the other social sciences, is urged to do something more. Pure research is out; research applied to practical programs is occasionally permitted, but it is better to call it by another name, such as survey or inquiry; what is really wanted is action. Theoretical formulations remain in the background; Unesco has not yet accepted Kurt Lewin’s famous dictum that “there is nothing so practical as a good theory.”

None of this is being said in criticism of Unesco. It is not a research organization. It is the educational, scientific, and cultural arm of the United Nations, which was certainly conceived and designed to carry out very practical programs. It is natural, therefore, for Unesco to ask practical questions of its psychological consultants, and we should not be afraid to supply answers whenever we honestly think we have the necessary information. What is needed is a kind of cautious courage, if that paradoxical expression may be permitted—“cautious” because we must be sure of our ground in advance, and “courage” because when we are sure, we must be willing to say so. Of course we will make mistakes. Nadel, referring to the similar case of anthropologists who are asked to give advice regarding technological change or related problems, insists that “the blunders of the anthropologists will be ‘better’ blunders” (page 55) than those made by the layman. I think we should be able to make the same modest claim for ourselves. It also requires courage, however, to say “I do not know,” and this too we must be willing to do on occasions, even if it means a temporary loss of face for our discipline in a world of practical men.

A third role conflict arises out of an uncertainty on the part of the international psychologist as to whether he is to function as scientist or as administrator, and if both, how these two roles can be integrated. What usually happens is that you plan an investigation, either one which you have suggested or which has been requested, describe it in an interminable series of memoranda, find the person to carry it out, prepare his contract, arrange for payment, discuss details with him, and send him off—an American to India, a Frenchman to Japan, an Englishman to Brazil—not without an occasional pang of regret. The research and the publication
will be his; you may get your name mentioned in the preface. To paraphrase the familiar expression, you are often a mid-wife, but never a mother. This is similar to what happens when a professor becomes a foundation executive, with the disadvantage that here you are usually working on a much smaller budget, but with the compensation, if you are truly international-minded, that your geographical scale of operations is the whole world. At the same time it remains true that this particular role conflict makes it impossible for many competent psychologists to identify themselves permanently with an international organization.

In spite of these role conflicts and their attendant frustrations, however, when one looks over the activities fostered directly or indirectly by Unesco in relation to psychology during the past few years, the list turns out to be impressive indeed. I have already written down elsewhere a summary of these activities (10), and without going over the same ground again, I shall try instead to indicate the various ways in which Unesco has functioned in this context, with brief interpretative comments on each, as well as specific illustrative examples.

(1) In the earlier days of Unesco, research occupied a somewhat larger place in the program, even if its practical implications were relatively remote. The series of community studies, in which psychological techniques played a significant part, and which were undertaken as a contribution to the understanding of national cultures, belong in this category. There were eight of these altogether, two each in France, Australia, Sweden, and India. Of these, four have been published, those conducted in France and Australia (3, 15, 16), and briefer accounts are available of the Swedish studies (9). Another example in this category is the nine-nation study of national stereotypes, the results of which have been reported by Buchanan and Cantril (4). These are for the most part first rate investigations, but I do not believe that Unesco can be expected to support similar research as part of its present or future program. The fact that what was formerly the Tensions Project has become incorporated into a Division of Applied Social Sciences indicates this change in emphasis.

(2) Secondly, where research with practical international implications is already available, Unesco has at least in one case, namely with regard to race, engaged in the process of giving the widest possible diffusion to the results. Responding to a request from the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, Unesco has produced an impressive series of publications in this field, interdisciplinary of course, but with psychology represented, which have appeared in several languages and are among Unesco's "best-sellers" (26). This program has been exceedingly successful and has been actively supported by all member-states, with the notable exception of the Union of South Africa which has now, not entirely by coincidence, withdrawn from the organization. In a much smaller way a similar activity has been started in the case of discrimination against women, so far limited to an issue of the Unesco "Courier" which featured
an article by Ashley Montagu demonstrating that women are superior to men (12). I foresee the possibility that if this incipient campaign is too successful, the “Courier” may have to devote a future issue to the thesis that men are not really inferior after all.

(3) In the third place, a substantial amount of research has been sponsored or financed in response to requests from member-states. The most familiar example to this audience is of course the important series of investigations on intergroup tensions in India, conducted by Gardner and Lois Murphy with a large group of Indian colleagues (13). This category includes also a study of intergeneration conflicts in Japan by Jean Stoetzel, professor of social psychology at the Sorbonne, who gave his book, not altogether accidentally, the title “Without the Chrysanthemum and the Sword” (19). More recently there has been concluded a series of studies of tensions arising from the introduction into Israel of many immigrant groups with vastly different cultures; the Norwegian sociologist Arvid Brodersen worked on this problem with a group of Israeli psychologists and sociologists (24). At the present time, Joseph Nuttin of the University of Louvain is being supported by Unesco in an investigation of the relatively mild but still significant conflict between the French and Flemish speaking populations of Belgium.

Lastly I must mention in this connection an exciting assignment from which I have just returned, namely, serving as a Unesco consultant for the Brazilian Center for Educational Research. This Center, affiliated with the Ministry of Education, was set up this past year in response to the desire of the Brazilian authorities to improve their whole educational system in the light of a more thorough understanding of the realities of Brazilian life, with all its regional and cultural variations. To this end, as one of the documents of the Center expresses it, the need was felt for “a cultural map of Brazil” to include those ethnological, sociological, demographic, and psychological aspects of Brazilian culture which are relevant to educational problems, and at the same time to give due weight to their changing character in the light of on-going industrial and technological developments. It is too early to speak of important practical results, but investigations now under way or planned which have particular relevance to psychology include a survey of the attitudes of parents and teachers to the schools, a content analysis of the racial and national stereotypes as well as the social and ethical values found in school textbooks, the effect of social stratification and class on educational goals, special problems arising out of the adaptation of immigrants, re-examination of the curriculum in the light of the developmental level of children of different ages, the relation between socialization in the home and in the school, and so forth. Some of these are in the pilot study stage; some are well advanced. This program too is interdisciplinary, but with psychology playing an active part. As a matter of fact, one of the co-directors is a distinguished member of the American Psychological Association, Robert J. Havighurst of the University of Chicago, and several Brazilian psychol-
ogists are cooperating actively. The "foreign" social scientists supplied by Unesco are working closely with their Brazilian colleagues, headed by Anisio Teixeira, who had the original idea for the Center, and Roberto Moreira, the Brazilian co-director. The fact that the Center is part of the Ministry of Education, and is strongly supported by the Minister himself, gives it a unique opportunity to make its influence felt in very practical ways. Already the Center is becoming known throughout the country, and recently the Secretary of Education of Goiás, a Brazilian state now in the process of active development, applied to the Center for aid in formulating the new law governing all levels and varieties of education in his state. One Regional Center is now functioning in São Paulo, and others are projected.

These requests from member-states to Unesco for the services of psychologists and other social scientists can be expected to continue in the future, and to be met, since the new orientation of the organization's program envisages increased attention to what member-states want in the way of aid. All will depend on how well psychologists fulfill the often difficult and complicated tasks which they are called upon to perform. So far there is reason to believe that the countries which have asked for psychologists are not dissatisfied with what they have received.

Next might be mentioned Unesco's active encouragement of research which is designed to uncover facts which have important practical, and especially educational implications. In connection with the race project, for example, several investigations were undertaken in Brazil (21), and also in the French West Indies (11), because it was felt that these areas could furnish an objective demonstration of the manner in which different racial groups could live together in relative harmony. The results revealed somewhat more prejudice and discrimination, at least in Brazil, than had been anticipated, but still considerably less than in other regions with which we are familiar. In this category also I would place the Unesco studies in the Belgian Congo of the adaptation of rural workers to a new urban agglomeration (5), as well as studies elsewhere in Africa on the emergence of new leaders (élites), including women, who play a particularly important role in the process of acculturation, or the integration of new technologies into the local cultures. In all of these studies, the lead has been taken by anthropologists and sociologists, but a number of psychologists have also been involved, and in the case of the Brazilian investigation, even the "other" social scientists have included the application of psychological techniques, for example, in the exploration of racial stereotypes.

The next area to which I turn represents what is perhaps one of the most fruitful and most practical of all possible psychological applications. For years the United Nations, Unesco, and the other specialized agencies, as well as many national governments, have engaged in a series of operations designed to improve international understanding, develop international cooperation, raise standards of living, or "win friends and
influence people." Until recently, these programs have been developed and supported in the hope that they fulfilled these goals, but with little real knowledge as to the extent to which they were succeeding. A number of years ago Rensis Likert urged upon Unesco the setting aside of a portion of its budget for the purpose of evaluating its own program, but his recommendations were not followed. In the last few years, mainly under the leadership of Alva Myrdal, the former director of the Department of Social Sciences, an evaluation program, though on a small scale, has been launched. The International Social Science Council has prepared for Unesco a series of papers on the methodology of evaluation (25); a Canadian psychologist, George Ferguson of McGill, worked for several months with the Service of Exchange of Persons and developed a scheme for the evaluation of Unesco fellowships; pilot studies have been undertaken in the evaluation of the race pamphlets (by Gerhart Saenger (17) under the auspices of SPSSI), of the effects of a new library in a working class district of Delhi, as well as of Fundamental Education Projects in Thailand and Ceylon; suggestions have been prepared (by S. P. Hayes, Jr.) for the evaluation of technical assistance projects; several meetings have been held between social scientists and “operators” in order to discuss the manner in which these materials may be made useful and practical. In all these undertakings psychologists have taken a leading part, including a number of SPSSI members such as Stuart Cook, Marie Jahoda and their colleagues at New York University, Brewster Smith, Henry Riecken; also Ernest Beaglehole of New Zealand, K. M. Miller of Australia, G. E. Burroughs of the United Kingdom, Wallace Lambert and William Line of Canada, in addition to those whose names I have already mentioned.

There are at least three major difficulties in the way of a satisfactory realization of the program of evaluation. The first is that although the operators, those who are responsible for action programs either as administrators or field representatives, want evaluation, they want it without having to spend any money or use any large part of the time of their personnel. They ask that evaluation be “built in,” absorbed in the regular reporting process, without sacrificing any of the on-going operations. This desire is understandable, but it is a source of real frustration to those who know something of the complexity of the task, and the need for time, money, and trained personnel in order to accomplish it successfully. The attempt is being made by the social scientists to indicate what can be done simply and inexpensively, at the same time urging that whenever possible and whenever necessary a thorough and more elaborate evaluation program be undertaken. The feeling of frustration persists, however.

A second difficulty, and one which pervades many of the activities described above, refers to our failure to communicate adequately to administrators. Few of us are successful in writing in language which anyone besides our own colleagues can understand and apply. The problem is wider, however, than that of avoiding technical terminology. It involves
also the need to place oneself at the starting point, and within the frames of reference, of those who are responsible for action programs. This can sometimes be done through the collaboration of people from both sides of this particular "curtain." Sometimes it requires a closer acquaintance and more direct involvement in the program itself before deciding how it should be evaluated. This is occasionally described as "getting your hands dirty," a phrase which unfortunately may sound just a little condescending on our part. In any case, too few of us have taken this time-consuming but frequently necessary method of making ourselves more useful.

A third difficulty arises out of the danger that once the need for evaluation has been recognized, too much may be expected of the evaluator. The task is sometimes exceedingly complicated, for example, when a Government asks to have an evaluation of its whole national program of fundamental education, and we must be very careful not to over-sell our techniques. On the whole, we have been modest in our claims, but it may be that our attitude has not always been made as clear as it should be. It was suggested at a recent meeting that we should make our modesty more blatant!

(6) Unesco has also stimulated the international development of psychology, both in the areas of teaching and research, through what might be called promotional activities under the auspices of the Department of Social Sciences. The Department, for example, has aided the establishment of the International Union of Scientific Psychology, and contributes to its administrative expenses and its research program through an annual subvention; the IUSP, for example, is now proposing to engage in an international study of the origin and development of national stereotypes. Unesco has held seminars on the teaching of social science, including social psychology, in India, the Near East, and Latin America; it has arranged for a few visiting professorships; it is contemplating the setting up of regional research institutes in the social sciences. The Department of Education has already set up an institute for child study in Thailand, working in close association with the Department of Psychology of the University of Toronto. The International Social Science Council, through its International Research Office on the Social Implications of Technological Change, is making a study of indices of personal disorganization following urbanization in countries undergoing rapid industrial change. The World Federation for Mental Health was aided both by Unesco and the World Health Organization in its investigation of early childhood training in several national cultures (18). The World Association for Public Opinion Research has undertaken for Unesco a study of the problems involved in international public opinion research, as well as the setting up of machinery, on a pilot basis, for recording in several countries the changing trends of opinion on international affairs. This list is not complete.

(7) Finally, it should be made clear that there are a great many activities of a psychological nature which are being carried on interna-
tionally "without benefit of Unesco." The World Health Organization has called psychologists as well as psychiatrists to participate in its program; so has the International Labour Organization. SPSSI members are familiar with the seven-nation study of attitudes and of reaction to threat, reported in part in our own Journal (23), supported by the Ford Foundation, and arising indirectly out of Unesco's Tensions Project. The World Federation for Mental Health has been working on the techniques of international conferences, a topic previously explored by Unesco, with the cooperation of SPSSI members Dorwin Cartwright, Alvin Zander, Robert MacLeod, and others; it is hoping soon to embark on a research program involving Alex Bavelas, Margaret Mead, A. T. M. Wilson, and others, on national similarities or variations in the operation of certain of the principles of group dynamics and communication. The European Productivity Agency has called in psychologists (Rensis Likert, Leland Bradford, Chris Argyris, and others) to aid in its introduction of an understanding of "human relations" into certain industries in countries under its jurisdiction. A number of individuals—Brad Hudson of the Rice Institute, Harold H. Anderson of Michigan State University, Gordon Allport of Harvard, Doris Allen of Cincinnati, and others—have organized significant international research in various parts of the world (7). Still more psychologists have worked with colleagues in other countries on what might be termed a "bi-lateral" basis (Daniel Katz, David Krech, Herbert Hyman, and others). This list of activities could be greatly extended, but even as it is, I think it is a very respectable one indeed, both in quality and in quantity. International Psychology has acquired a definite place in the sun.

*   *   *   *   *   *   *

In what has already been said, some conception of the role of psychologists in international affairs has, I hope, emerged at least by implication. I should like now to describe this role somewhat more explicitly, and add a brief consideration of some further aspects. The role demands an acceptance of certain international values, such as those included in the International Declaration of Human Rights; I may add parenthetically that since that declaration has been supported by our own government, there is no incompatibility whatsoever between loyalty to these values and loyalty to the United States, all the hysteria in Los Angeles and elsewhere notwithstanding. The role demands also a willingness to administer as well as to create, to act as well as to investigate, and at least occasionally to answer questions as well as to ask them. It involves a little less apologizing for the backward state of our science and a slightly greater readiness to stick out our collective necks. It also requires some salesmanship, on occasions. Perhaps the world should be beating a path-way to our door, but we can help by making the access a little less difficult.

We have things to say, if the world will listen. We have things to say, as I have already indicated, about race, about the fundamental equality
in the genetic constitution of all human groups, about the inequity of all political systems based on the notion of an inevitable hierarchy of physical characteristics. This is a problem which our own country is slowly solving, but others are not so fortunate. Recently, a courageous South African scholar (Quintin Whyte) has written that the "policy of apartheid can lead only to bitterness, racial strife and possibly to revolution" (22). We require no Cassandras to warn us of the international dangers inherent in such a policy. We have something to say, too, about the alleged inferiority of women, still kept in a situation of subservience in many parts of the world. We have something to say of the dangers inherent in national stereotypes, which so often cause us to act on the basis of a distorted image of what other people are like. We have something to say about the irrationality of our attitudes towards those who differ from us in physical features, in religious beliefs, and in national origins, and of the harmful effects of such attitudes. We have something to say about the human implications of technological change, about what happens when the value systems of people are shaken by the introduction of new ways of gaining a livelihood; there is still pertinence in the often quoted remark of George Bernard Shaw that the Golden Rule should be revised to read: "Don't do unto others what you would like others to do unto you; their tastes might be different." I should add that this concern with human and social implications is well represented by the activities of our colleague D. V. McGranahan in the Department of Social Affairs of the United Nations. We have something to say about the manner in which our perceptions of external reality, including international reality, are shaped by our group membership. Long ago, when the French and the Spaniards were in conflict, it was pointed out that the "truth" was very different on the two sides of the Pyrenees, and there are many "mountains" which perform the same function to-day. It would not be difficult to expand this long list.

Where we do not have the facts, we have at least in some cases the techniques for discovering them. As has already been indicated, we can help countries as different as India and Belgium to get a clearer understanding of the tensions which divide the different groups in their population. We have begun to do something about the evaluation of action programs designed to improve international relations. We could, if we were asked, aid in the selection of international personnel in the area of Technical Assistance and elsewhere, many of whom fail not because of the lack of occupational competence, but because of inadequate personal adjustment. Within certain nations, there are some signs of interest in this possibility, so far restricted to fairly low echelons. (If I may dream for a moment, I wonder whether some future historian writing of the year 1956 will express wonder that there was so much concern about the physical health of a candidate for public office and not a word said about anybody's mental health! I hasten to add that in this particular case everything points to the fact that he would pass such a test with flying
colors, but I am not sure that the same could be said for certain leaders at the state rather than the national level). Psychologists have already been involved in mental health problems of personnel within the United Nations secretariat.

There is of course a great deal that we do not know, many problems which require more, and still more research. Recently there took place in Geneva, under Unesco's auspices, a conference dealing with potential social science investigations related to "Peaceful Cooperation." The IUSP was asked to contribute a working paper, the elements for which were prepared by a group of American psychologists connected with the Research Exchange on the Prevention of War. They suggested research on such problems as reactions to fear and threat, the nature of multiple loyalties, the problem of nation-centered perception, the significance of personality factors, the development of attitudes, etc. This list too could be greatly expanded. Gordon Allport, for example, has indicated a large number of areas in connection with which further investigations are needed (2). Some of these areas require an international research design; others can be explored, at least in their initial stages, by one psychologist working in his own laboratory or institution. In this sense, the further international applications of psychology will depend on the ingenuity and industry of many who never leave their own academic firesides. Perhaps this may give a little comfort to those who have been frustrated in their efforts to enter the international scene more directly.

Such frustration is inevitable, because the openings are few, at least for the regular posts, and they must be distributed among many nations. In the case of Americans, however, the barriers (I think I should use a Lewinian term occasionally) have become accentuated as the result of the "clearance" procedures which have been applied during the past three years. It is not always realized that every United States citizen, whether he is to be appointed a regular member of the secretariat of a United Nations organization, or sent on a mission, or even invited to a two-day conference without pay (apart from expenses), must be cleared by the International Organizations Employees Loyalty Board of the United States Civil Service Commission. Although I have no exact statistics, I am certain that this has greatly reduced the extent of American participation. I know, for example, that when I was with Unesco in 1949, there were so many Americans on the regular staff that usually a new member could be appointed only if one resigned; this was not the case in 1955, when there were fewer Americans than the traffic could bear in terms of the "quotas" established to meet the demands of geographical distribution. There can be no doubt in my mind that the clearance procedures bear the major responsibility for this situation, which applies to all levels and all degrees of participation. Some Americans have failed to pass the tests applied; others have refused to be considered even if they were reasonably sure of being accepted, because they were unwilling to be subjected to an investigation which is never pleasant, and which may
even be a devastating and soul-shattering experience; others were not cleared within the necessary time. Still others were not even considered, because it was easier and quicker to appoint a citizen with a less exigent nationality.

On one occasion, a distinguished American was invited to a meeting in Paris under the auspices of the Social Science Department of Unesco, but was not permitted to attend; the topic under discussion was the highly “sensitive” one of terminology in the social sciences, with special reference to the problem of translation. There was no American participant at this meeting. Another equally distinguished American was prevented from attending a conference in Geneva on evaluation techniques in relation to Technical Assistance. Both of these men were cleared later, long after the meetings were over. The net result of all of this has been a loss to many Americans of valuable international experience, a loss to the organizations of the expert knowledge and advice which these men could have contributed, and without doubt a marked diminution in American prestige among a great many of our friends abroad. Few if any of us would argue against the necessity of adequate controls in the case of Americans occupying sensitive posts, but in Unesco there are not even any “classified” documents. The recent report on the Federal Loyalty-Security Program by the Special Committee of the Association of the Bar of the City of New York has recommended the elimination of all clearance procedures in the case of Americans working for international organizations, and I can only echo their conclusions. (I must add that I am speaking entirely as a private citizen. I am not now a member of the Unesco staff, and in any case I would have no right to represent the official position of the organization.)

Many of us in the United States are also disturbed at an apparent trend toward what has been called “anti-intellectualism,” which would presumably apply to our own profession as well. It is difficult to determine how far this trend has gone, and how much it affects our position. An investigation planned by Hatt & North, and conducted by the National Opinion Research Center (8) was concerned with the occupational hierarchy reported by a nation-wide sample of 2920 respondents. There were 88 occupations ranked, with United States Supreme Court Justice in first place and shoe-shiner last. “Psychologist” was in 22nd place, just below nuclear physicist (20th), and ahead of civil engineer (23rd), sociologist (27th), biologist (29th), building contractor (33rd), economist (34th), and “singer in a night club” (73rd). College professor was in 7th place, and “scientist” in 8th. This does not look like “anti-intellectualism” to me, but the study was conducted in 1947, and I have not been able to find anything more recent of comparable scope. We have all heard the slogan: “Get the professors out of Washington.” I have not heard anything similar in connection with the United Nations specialized agencies in Paris, Geneva, or Rome, although as I indicated above, the professors are expected to function within a context of practicality.
As far as the United States is concerned, we have experienced very recently a tribute to psychology and the other social sciences which is so significant and so far reaching in its implications as to represent undoubtedly the greatest single compliment which we "intellectuals" have ever received. I refer, of course, to the decision of a unanimous United States Supreme Court on May 17, 1954, declaring compulsory school segregation unconstitutional, which was based in part on the findings of psychological research. It would have been an optimist indeed who could have predicted even a few years ago that the Chief Justice would write, in connection with the detrimental effects of segregation, that "whatever may have been the extent of psychological knowledge at the time of Plessy v. Ferguson (this refers to the "separate but equal" doctrine which the Court approved in 1896), this finding is amply supported by modern authority." As we all know, the decision also includes references to investigations conducted by our colleagues Kenneth Clark, Isidor Chein, Gunnar Myrdal, and others. Is it too optimistic to hope that some time in the not far distant future, the international implications of these and other investigations will also be realized? Already the Special Committee of the United Nations dealing with the situation in South Africa has included in its report a reference to the Unesco publications in the field of race, as has also the Sub-Commission on Discrimination and the Protection of Minorities of the Economic and Social Council, in its international survey of discrimination in the field of education. Perhaps even the Union of South Africa will not be able to hold out forever against the scientific, as well as the moral pressures to which it is being subjected. (To take another example, Gilbert (6) has suggested that there has been a decrease in national stereotyping among American college students as the result of developments in the social sciences. If that is the case, there may in time be international educational consequences as well.)

* * * * * *

So far I must have given the impression of a fair degree of optimism regarding the possibility of fulfilling the role under discussion. There are obvious difficulties, however, in the way of carrying out this role to our own satisfaction. We are generally at the mercy of political events over which we have no control. We can study minor tensions, but not major ones. We can explore attitudes in certain countries, but not in others; investigations of public opinion, for example, are at present impossible in most if not all countries under dictatorial regimes. The excessive development of chauvinism in many parts of the world rules out objective research of many kinds even when conducted by social scientists of the same nationality. Only the future will show whether the scope of our activities can be enlarged. It is not without significance, however, that at the last General Conference of Unesco, held at Montevideo in 1954, a resolution inviting social scientists to explore the possibilities of research on "peaceful cooperation" was introduced jointly by the United States,
India, and Czechoslovakia, and adopted with enthusiastic unanimity. Whether anything practical will emerge remains to be seen. In any case, the position which I think we must adopt is that we should do what we can, where we can, and when we can. Surely even a small contribution is better than none, and that small contribution I think we are making.

Not we alone, of course. On many occasions in this paper I have referred to interdisciplinary activities, in which psychologists are cooperating with representatives of other social science disciplines. I have addressed myself to the role of the psychologist because that is my topic, but much could be said also about what sociologists, anthropologists, political scientists, economists, demographers, historians, legal experts, psychiatrists, and others are doing along somewhat similar lines. All of these have their important place in the development of an international social science, but so, I think, have we. Perhaps our special contribution lies in our concern with the individual, and our emphasis on the importance of method, which makes us a little less willing than some others to draw conclusions on the basis of inadequate and doubtful evidence. Psychologists are a little more likely to "come from Missouri."

---

As I read over what I have written, I am struck by the large number of international activities in which SPSSI members have played an active part. Since this has always been one of the major preoccupations of our Society, I can only express the hope that this survey gives us some collective grounds for satisfaction. I hope, too, that Kurt Lewin would have been pleased to see that at least some steps have been taken to develop the practical implications of international research in psychology.

Thank you again for the honor you have done me.

REFERENCES


