

Kurt Lewin Memorial Address, 1986: War, Peace, and Psychology

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I am immensely pleased to join so many of my teachers, mentors, and admired colleagues in psychology as a recipient of the Lewin Award—the one of all possible honors that means the most to me. Often recipients of the award have honored the memory of Kurt Lewin by drawing on their own contributions of socially relevant research in their talks, research that was a primary reason for their having been chosen. I did not receive the award because of my research, so I will devote this address to the topic on SPSSI's long-term agenda that now most urgently needs our attention—war and peace.

Some Preliminaries

I do not need to argue for the preemptive importance of avoiding war and preserving peace. Informed people agree that, if it occurred, all-out nuclear war would be so destructive as to make all other issues irrelevant. The world's military potential for destructiveness is continually growing, and our knowledge of the potentially conclusive consequences of nuclear war is growing too. (I wonder if our fascination with the recently discovered iridium layer at the boundary of the Cretaceous and the Tertiary, associated with the demise of the dinosaurs, may not reflect our unwanted awareness that there may be no people—no future geologists—to detect the stratum of radioisotopes deposited in a global nuclear winter. We have good reason to identify with the dinosaurs!) In spite of over three decades in which mutual deterrence between the United States and the Soviet Union has almost miraculously saved humankind from the consequences

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of our inventiveness and folly, we have reason to believe the risks of nuclear holocaust are now probably greater than ever, with the inexorable proliferation of nuclear technology and competence. The destabilizing potential of contemporary technical developments in the accuracy of missiles, and in antisatellite and anti-missile defenses, is also lending new plausibility to first-strike options and to quick automatic nuclear response to the first unreliable indications of nuclear attack.

The 50th anniversary of the founding of SPSSI makes it especially appropriate for me to use this occasion to attempt to gain historical perspective on how psychology has dealt with matters of war and peace. SPSSI's anniversary actually coincides with the 50th anniversary of my first course in psychology as a sophomore at Reed College. (Psychology then was not thought to be appropriate for freshmen.) The next year brought my first contact with Kurt Lewin's ideas, in J. F. Brown's (1936) radical text, *Psychology and the Social Order*, which combined orthodox Lewinian, Freudian, and Marxist perspectives.

My agenda today is to share perspectives on our role as psychologists in trying to prevent nuclear holocaust, not to present data. I assume—and it is important to make the assumption explicit—that virtually everyone here and abroad wants to avoid nuclear war: doves, hawks, and “owls,” President Reagan, Secretary Gorbachev, almost all of us. (Here I use “us” in the fully inclusive sense that I wish were more prevalent.) I also assume, and take this assumption as equally important, that psychological knowledge and expertise touch only a small part of the big problem. If we are to contribute what we can and maintain our sanity, it behooves us to avoid hubris and chutzpah. The world's peril is neither primarily our fault nor our responsibility, except to the limited extent that responsibility follows from our meager resources and power. We should avoid grandiosity in both our pretensions and our guilt. But we have to live and die in our endangered world, which we hope our children also will enjoy, so we surely ought to do all that we can. From this perspective, we could be doing a lot more.

Psychology in the Wars

It is a stock complaint that psychology and psychologists are readily mobilized to contribute to their nations' wars, but are slow to accept social responsibility for the preservation of peace and the promotion of social justice and human welfare in peacetime (Reiff, 1970). But this is only to be expected (Smith, 1970). World War I “put psychology on the map,” and as O'Donnell (1985) reminds us in his fine history of *The Origins of Behaviorism*,

One cannot read the reminiscences of participating psychologists without sensing that their military experiences represented the high points of their professional careers Not even “pacifist principles” and “doubts about the war” could keep Quaker-bred

Edward Tolman from seeking a commission in the psychological testing service Incredibly, Yerkes regretted that the war did not last longer The newly discovered ability . . . to see their research rapidly translated into practical action provided many psychologists with a sense of satisfaction and accomplishment that their university experiences could not have furnished. (p. 239)

World War II, in which my generation participated, mobilized a maturer psychology on a much larger scale, leaving in its wake the new professions of human factors and clinical psychology, and a greatly expanded and inspired subdiscipline of social psychology. Psychologists again felt the euphoria of constructive involvement, which, if I am correct in my historical perceptions, has left American psychologists with a considerably better aftertaste than after psychology's participation in World War I—just as to many of us the war against Hitler still seems to have had a grim historical necessity that we can no longer quite find in the war against the Kaiser.

Each of these wars created a strong national consensus in which most psychologists participated. And it was not just American psychologists who rose to their country's call: psychologists of each belligerent nation were called to duty. (Of course, Jewish psychologists in Germany were not asked, and were fortunate if they had managed to flee.) The prepotency of national identity over international science during these wars should remind us of the extraordinary continuing power of nationalism (or of ethnocentrism or tribalism—they amount to the same thing) as a disastrous feature of our century, a feature that has played a much more salient role in international affairs in the years since World War II than psychologists or other social scientists ever anticipated.

National consensus and the effective mobilization of psychology have been at their peak in our participation in the two world wars, but our wars do not automatically produce either consensus or psychological mobilization. Psychologists cannot claim any discernible credit for our ultimate withdrawal from Vietnam, but at least they were not united behind its prosecution, and some of them prepared a *Dove's Guide* (Rosenberg, Verba, & Converse, 1970), which is still an exemplary distillation of research findings for the guidance of peace activists. As the United States moves ever closer to overt belligerency in Central America, seeming to yield a grimly negative answer to Lloyd Etheredge's (1985) pertinent question, *Can Governments Learn?*, at least there is no indication that American psychologists are rushing to bring their talents to the support of the contras.

The role of socially concerned psychologists must certainly be different in periods of *dissensus* than it is in those rare times when they are in agreement with each other and with almost everyone else about national priorities. Political conflict on the national scale is inevitably mirrored within the American Psychological Association (APA). Even when it is possible to pass resolutions on public policy through the APA council, as was the case with the 1982 resolution

supporting a freeze on nuclear weapons tests, this more usual situation in which substantial disagreement remains presents radically different challenges to American psychology than it faced in the two world wars. The challenge to those of us who set a very high priority on moving toward peace is to induce more of our colleagues and our fellow citizens to agree with us—and to bring our skills and resources to bear as psychologists and citizens without any invitation from the government and without the support of a national consensus.

Fear Appeals or Empowerment?

My part in trying to meet the challenge involves my presence here talking to you, I hope in ways that advance the peace agenda. An approach that is tempting is to dramatize the horrors of nuclear holocaust to gain people's attention and mobilize them into action. In pursuing this strategy, Helen Caldicott (1980) and Jonathan Schell (1982) have surely made real contributions, and it was important to dramatize the futility of civil defense when the government was still pushing it as a prominent component of national policy. But such authors have made their point by now. On *psychological* grounds, I do not think it is helpful to raise people's level of overt anxiety about nuclear holocaust, except when they are provided with very specific things to do about it (Leventhal, 1970).

Correspondingly, I have serious reservations about Robert Lifton's (1967) often-cited concept of "psychic numbing" as a metaphor for our dangerous inattention to the nuclear threat. The term indeed fits the adaptation of Hiroshima survivors to the inconceivably extreme emotional stress to which they had been subjected. But to use it for our own avoidant reactions seems inappropriate and cheapens the concept as originally applied—as if we were to equate our own careless disregard of the Nazi death camps with the emotional devastation of their surviving inmates. The kind of denial that is involved when we push the prospects of nuclear holocaust away from our central consciousness is much more like the way that we usually disregard our human mortality in the course of everyday life.

We are all mortal, but most of us, most of the time, do not dwell on the prospect of our death. Nor should we—there is no point in it, and the morbid concern would not only spoil our current enjoyment of life, it might even get in the way of our coping effectively with those stresses and dangers that we *can* manage. Richard Lazarus (1983) has rightly begun to rehabilitate the mechanism of denial, which psychoanalysis proposed as the most primitive of defenses. Even though we pretend to be immortal, many of us *have* stopped smoking. Some of us *are* using our seat belts. Our everyday denial of death need not stop us from adopting measures that are likely to prolong our lives (though the seat-belt example indicates that overcoming "normal" denial is no simple matter. So many of us still fail to "buckle up.")

A diagnosis of psychic numbing leads to the prescription that we should escalate the stimulus so as to break through the affective barrier.¹ But what *is* the barrier, if we are dealing with normal denial? It is not affective numbing, I think, but helplessness, lack of a sense of efficacy. We cannot avoid dying—so why worry about it?—*except* when there are concrete things to do that might postpone it. Individually and collectively, we feel powerless in the face of the ever escalating arms race. So why dwell on the horrors ahead?

Of course there is a rich psychological literature in which essentially the same point emerges from diverse theoretical perspectives, that tells us how feelings of low competence (White, 1959) or low self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977) or learned helplessness with its accompanying attributional style (Abramson, Seligman, & Teasdale, 1978) impede effective coping in what can become a vicious circle. I think that the empirical findings underlying this area of substantial agreement are among the most humanly important in recent psychology. (See Smith, 1983, for an attempt to bring this literature into focus.) But there is nothing new in seeing the relevance of helplessness to our avoidance of issues of nuclear war. Morawski and Goldstein (1985) remind us that, in an early number of the *Journal of Social Issues* devoted to nuclear matters, Woodward (1948) commented on the seeming contradiction between the high level of awareness of the dangers of the bomb and the surprisingly small numbers expressing fear or worry; he wrote: "It seems unlikely that many people will feel active concern about a problem before which they feel helpless" (p. 11). Morawski and Goldstein cite several other psychologists who, as researchers and commentators in the early 1950s, attributed to their sense of impotence people's readiness to leave matters to expert authorities. From this diagnosis of the problem, it follows that what is needed most in order to get people involved in the attempt to prevent nuclear war is to increase their sense of potential effectiveness. People need to be empowered by precept and example, and by political organization.

Without paths for constructive action clearly in view, raising people's level of anxiety may actually defeat its purpose. For that reason, the kind of campaign mounted by the public health authority Victor Sidel (1983) makes more sense to me than continuing to stress "the last epidemic." Sidel has been telling all the audiences he can reach about the heavy costs in health and social welfare entailed by our current investments in the arms race. The costs that he dramatizes are within the grasp of reason, and do not immediately evoke self-protective denial. His strategy, of course, involves head-on challenge to the main thrust of policy in the Reagan administration. As I emphasize later on, the central issues *are* political and have to be faced in political terms.

¹Sandman and Valenti (1986) reject the Caldicott strategy (and say that Physicians for Social Responsibility now also rejects it) for essentially the same reasons as mine. They support the idea of psychic numbing by interpreting it as denial—"working at not caring." We are in substantial agreement on essentials, though not about terminology.

Our prescription for the general public must also apply to ourselves as psychologists. Our failure to rise to the challenge of nuclear war to a degree commensurate with its importance can plausibly be attributed to our own bafflement in the face of its enormity. We also need to be empowered. With ourselves as with the general public, however, a slick public relations job will not do. We need a convincingly realistic basis for our involvement. We have to take our experience of relative ineffectiveness into account, and must learn from it.

A Prospectus for What Follows

In Paul Boyer's (1985) valuable review of "American thought and culture at the dawn of the atomic age," *By the Bomb's Early Light*, repetitive cycles of involvement and withdrawal with respect to nuclear issues are documented, which Morawski and Goldstein (1985) spell out for our own narrower field. I agree with these authors that historical perspective may help us get off this wheel of fate, as we must if we are to deal effectively with the world's peril and our own. To contribute toward this end, and in the spirit of SPSSI's semicentennial celebration, I will look selectively at SPSSI's relations to war and peace in its early days (before the bomb), then again at the period in the early 1960s when psychologists were most active (and I think effective), as background for an appraisal of present priorities.

Some Historical Perspective

The 1930s

The views of the world that were prevalent among American psychologists and their students in the mid-1930s when SPSSI was founded are so remote from ours today that it requires a strong imaginative act to evoke them. Although Hitler's recent rise to power presented a new threat, it is hard for us to remember the extent to which liberal psychologists and social scientists remained in the shadow of World War I and postwar disillusionment about the dismal outcome of its supposed ideals. I remember being much impressed as an undergraduate by Lasswell's (1927) classic study of wartime propaganda. Along with the munitions makers, propaganda became the popular villain of the 1930s, a social-psychological villain, so much a matter of public attention that my favorite humorist James Thurber even wrote a fable about the Very Proper Gander (Thurber, 1940). An Institute for Propaganda Analysis (Institute for Propaganda Analysis, Inc., 1937-1941; Lee & Lee, 1939) was established for research in methods used by propagandists in influencing public opinion. (Not surprisingly, it folded in December 1941.) The focus on propagandists and munitions makers (who were seen as insidiously linked) was mostly tied to pacifism and isola-

tionism, related but not identical positions endorsed by a variety of political types including radicals of Norman Thomas's socialist persuasion.

The enormous social and economic dislocations of the Great Depression and the rise of Hitler had led, of course, to a different sort of radical politics centering on the Communist Party, its various fellow-traveling affiliates, and the handful of "deviationist" radical cliques, all visible in the country at large but especially salient among intellectuals and around New York City. This was the time of the Spanish Civil War and America's Abraham Lincoln Brigade, and of the Popular Front in which Communists and democratic Socialists made temporary and unstable common cause. It was a time when Franklin D. Roosevelt held the United States together in ways that are impressive retrospectively. Yet it was also a time of extreme dissensus, with Liberty League Republicans viewing FDR's New Deal as treacherous socialism, and the radical Left seeing him as a reactionary "social fascist"; in which Stalinists and Trotskyites hated each other more intensely than they did the capitalist oppressors, and Stalinists could hardly distinguish between Trotskyites and Socialists.

For the Left, it became a time of enormous confusion, when suddenly the Soviet Union, previously the bastion of antifascism, entered into the pact that gave Hitler the fateful green light for his final steps toward war. As a student, I had become a pretty good Stalinist—a "fellow traveler" within the American Student Union at first, then a member of the Young Communist League. I have vivid memories of the soul-searchings, recriminations, and strenuous cognitive reorganization and reinterpretation that ensued for me and those I was close to, continuing well beyond America's entry into the war (and my getting drafted into the Army).

As Finison (e.g., 1986) and Stagner (1986) have told us in their recent accounts of SPSSI's early years, these crosscurrents of radical politics essentially immobilized SPSSI in regard to matters of peace and war. Stagner tells how the plans of a SPSSI committee that he chaired for a yearbook on that topic were stymied by the impasse, until after Hitler had invaded Russia, between the ideological positions of the Second and Third Internationals. If we need an antidote to our nostalgic semicentennial romanticism about SPSSI's radical past, we may find one in noting that irreconcilable disagreement about what brand of radicalism to espouse produced results as defeating to radical ends as no radicalism at all.

Looking Toward Peace in the War Years

In 1944 near the end of the war, 13 eminent psychologists (including Hilgard and Klineberg, who are among us today, and Allport, Likert, Murphy, and Tolman, other early SPSSI presidents) circulated a statement on human nature and the peace for signature by psychologists at large. One can read most of this

“psychologists’ manifesto” today with assent and respect. The “motherhood” principles that it announced and commented upon could *not* be taken for granted in wartime, and their prominent expression was a good proactive step attempting to influence policies about peace treaties, the Occupation, and the launching of the United Nations. Note, for instance, the following principles:

1. *War can be avoided: War is not born in men; it is built into men.*
4. *Condescension toward “inferior” groups destroys our chances for a lasting peace.*
 . . . The great dark-skinned populations of Asia and Africa, which are already moving toward a greater independence in their own affairs, hold the ultimate key to a stable peace
5. *Liberated and enemy peoples must participate in planning their own destiny.*
7. *If properly administered, relief and rehabilitation can lead to self-reliance and cooperation; if improperly, to resentment and hatred.*
10. *Commitment now may prevent post-war apathy and reaction.*

A few other principles, unexceptionable as ideals, strike me as less realistic, given the tragedies of the intervening decades:

3. *Racial, national, and group hatreds can, to a considerable degree, be controlled.*
 Through education and experience people . . . can learn that members of one racial, national or cultural group are basically similar to those of other groups Prejudice is a matter of attitudes, and attitudes are to a considerable extent a matter of training and information.
8. *The root-desires of the common people of all lands are the safest guide to framing a peace.*
 . . . The man [sic] in the street does not claim to understand the complexities of economics and politics, but he is clear as to the general directions in which he wishes to progress. His will can be studied [by adaptations of the public-opinion poll] . . .
9. *The trend of human relationships is toward ever wider units of collective security.*
 [Would that it were!] (Murphy, 1945, pp. 454–457)

Then no more than now could psychologists count on being listened to. They were nevertheless acting responsibly when they publicized their psychological perspective at a crucial human choice point.

At about the same time that the manifesto was being promulgated, and with a fresh start, Gardner Murphy finally produced the desired yearbook for SPSSI, under the title *Human Nature and Enduring Peace* (Murphy, 1945). Although he reprinted the manifesto in his concluding chapter, the rest of the book, composed of framing essays by Murphy and interrogatories put to over 50 collaborating “authorities,” does not fare so well from our point of vantage. The perspective is pervasively individualistic, with emphasis on frustration as the primary cause of war (the “frustration-aggression hypothesis”), and the proposed remedies mainly wishful and naive: among them, changing our fundamental attitudes towards ourselves and the world, and developing an international social psychology, with great research centers that would use modern polling techniques. As if he were taking the sort of doubts we would now have about this formulation into

account, however, Murphy prominently inserted a penultimate “note on insecurity” by Ralph White—one that Ralph could well have written today. Ralph White mentioned two implications of “the fear motive in international relations”:

(1) The element of realism in the fear of aggression, and in the nationalist’s reliance upon military power to achieve security, should be taken fully into account in any organization for peace or education for peace

(2) At the same time, the element of unrealistic, indiscriminating fear and suspicion of foreigners as such, which is characteristic of nationalist psychology everywhere today, is the central obstacle [to be] overcome if “peace-loving nations” are to remain firmly allied, or give up some aspects of sovereignty to a world organization. (Murphy, 1945, pp. 451–452)

In developing the second point, he turned explicitly to the prospect of U.S.–Soviet conflict, which elsewhere in the book received only the smallest passing attention, as compared with extensive treatment of our relations with former enemies:

If, for instance, an Anglo-American bloc fails to work harmoniously with a Soviet bloc throughout the coming decades, the chief disruptive factor seems likely to be an unrealistic, exaggerated fear and suspicion on one side or on both. (p. 452)

White ought to receive a prize for prescience, as well as for his continued wisdom and dedication to peaceful international relations.

Prescience, however, has not generally distinguished the future-oriented prescriptions of psychologists in this area, and despite White’s example, we cannot usually count on it—a fact that we might bear in mind as qualifying our assurance when we take strong stands that depend upon predictive assumptions. Of course, we have little basis for prescience. In particular, psychologists cannot be blamed for not anticipating the atom bomb, which as we now know has changed everything.

The 1960s

Let us jump to the 1960s, which were a major turning point in recent American culture. In regard to Soviet–American relations and the threat of war, they included brinks and *détente*. They also included our deepening involvement in the disaster of Vietnam, the hippies’ summer of love, the assassinations. As Morawski and Goldstein (1985) tell us, “The early 1960s witnessed a shift from psychological studies on civilian and military attitudes to investigations of the psychological dimensions of international relations in the nuclear age” (p. 280). For my purposes, the work of Urie Bronfenbrenner, Ralph White, and Charles Osgood is exemplary.

Bronfenbrenner (1961) and White (1970) especially highlighted the reciprocal processes of misperception illustrated in the Cold War (Bronfenbrenner)

and in the Vietnam conflict (White). To employ White's terms, in both conflicts each party held a diabolical image of the enemy and a moral image of the self. The descriptions and analyses of this "mirror image" phenomenon provided by Bronfenbrenner and White can be lastingly persuasive to people who encounter them; by now they have entered into social psychological common sense, though hardly into the common sense of the general public.

Bronfenbrenner and White sharpened our diagnostic acumen concerning a major psychological feature of international conflict; Osgood (1962) proposed psychologically sophisticated therapy in GRIT—graduated and reciprocated initiatives in tension-reduction—based on the same view of the preponderance of *security* considerations that Ralph White had advocated 17 years earlier (in Murphy, 1945). Osgood's scheme involved modest unilateral initiatives toward deescalating the conflict, always within limits that protect national security, and within a publicized framework of commitment to further deescalating steps if the adversary reciprocates.

Morawski and Goldstein (1985, footnote 4) tell us that not only was the GRIT plan well received among psychologists, but it was also taken seriously by policy makers. They cite documentation that it was examined by President Kennedy and his staff. Certainly, Kennedy's unilateral initiative in his American University speech on June 10, 1963, announcing "a strategy of peace" is a clear example of the GRIT approach in action (Etzioni, 1967). It led to the atmospheric nuclear test ban treaty, one of the few clear successes in U.S.–Soviet negotiations to limit the arms race. His assassination shortly thereafter deprived us of further examples until just recently, when the Reagan administration has twice failed to respond to Gorbachev's parallel initiative for a general moratorium on nuclear testing. I cannot talk about this "disconfirmation" of GRIT without bitterness.

The Present

Psychological contributions to the understanding of international relations as of the mid-1960s were summarized and assessed effectively in a classic volume on *International Behavior* edited by Herbert Kelman (1965), still a uniquely valuable resource. No such single source is yet available to pull together the much richer array of research and theory becoming available today from the resurgence of interest in nuclear conflict, provoked in the 1980s by unease about the policies of the Reagan administration. All the same, there are four excellent sources to which newcomers to these concerns may profitably turn to get their initial bearings—works that old hands can also savor with admiration, and learn from too. I want to use this occasion to advertise them.

One is the excellent *American Psychologist* article by Philip Tetlock (1986),

under the title, "Psychological Advice on Foreign Policy: What Do We Have to Contribute?" In a compact exposition and analysis, Tetlock provides a wise and comprehensive review of recent psychological research and theory that bears upon improving the policy-making process or generates knowledge to inform the content of foreign policy decisions. Two other sources were both produced by Ralph White, whose earlier major contributions to our topic I have already praised. In a comprehensive edited book of interdisciplinary readings on *Psychology and the Prevention of Nuclear War* sponsored by SPSSI, White (1986) offers 35 selections, previously published or specially written for the volume, that illustrate all of the major facets of the topic and exhibit most of the major contributors to it. His own recent volume, *Fearful Warriors: A Psychological Profile of U.S.-Soviet Relations* (White, 1984), also belongs on this "must list," as the fullest and best-grounded treatment of its topic. It also provides a unique example of the extent to which a psychologist can make himself master of the international relations trade as well as of his own.

My fourth suggested source was provided by Morton Deutsch (1983) in his International Society for Political Psychology presidential address, which I think is the best current brief theoretical analysis of war-threatening international conflict. Drawing on his own earlier research on modes of conflict resolution (Deutsch, 1973) and integrating ideas developed by Bronfenbrenner (1961), White (1970), Osgood (1962), and others in the 1960s, he depicts conflicts like those between the U.S. and the Soviet Union as involving a spiraling, malignant social process that arises in anarchic social situations in which "rational" behavior is impossible so long as the conditions for social order or mutual trust do not exist. In such situations, Deutsch notes that for either party to pursue its interests in its own welfare or security without regard for the other is self-defeating. The earmarks of the malignant process, the escalating vicious spiral, are a win-lose orientation, inner conflicts (within each of the parties) that get expressed in the external conflict and magnify it, cognitive rigidity, misjudgments and misperceptions, unwitting commitments that develop in the course of the conflict and make it hard to reverse, self-fulfilling prophecies (security-seeking responses to anticipated threat being themselves perceived as threatening and evoking in turn behavior that is realistically threatening), and a gamesmanship orientation that loses sight of realistic substantive issues in an abstract conflict over power as such. Deutsch has a number of suggestions for undoing the malignant process, establishing fair rules for competition, and developing a cooperative framework, which like his analysis are congruent with Osgood's and White's suggestions.

It was easy for me to select these excellent points of entry to the current psychological literature on the prevention of nuclear war, but it is virtually impossible to make a justified selection of particular projects or programs to illustrate the major themes in that literature. I will not even try, except to mention Kelman's (1979, 1982) field trials of direct communication between Palestinians

and Israelis, and Janis's (1985) work on crisis management, the subject of last year's Lewin Award address.

Implications for Psychologists' Roles

With this selective bird's-eye view of psychological contributions to the cause of peace, what precepts can we draw to guide and perhaps to encourage us in our own efforts?

I take a rather more charitable view of the part psychologists have played than do Morawski and Goldstein (1985), who lament how psychologists have followed the times in spite of their claim to scientific objectivity, how they have mainly served the establishment with "benign counseling" that can have little impact on events. I take it for granted that, as the record shows, psychologists have little prescience and that most do not get too far out of step with the dominant assumptions and ideology of their times. I do not expect psychologists to save the world; nor do I blame them much when they share all-too-human failings with their fellow citizens.

Since the times of SPSSI's founding and the end of World War II, all the same, I think psychology has gained in mature realism as it has become better qualified to make a distinctive contribution. In *By the Bomb's Early Light*, Boyer (1985) tells us that "In the early post-Hiroshima period, spokesmen for a quite amazing diversity of professions and ideological persuasions argued passionately that their particular expertise or ideology had suddenly become crucial to mankind's survival Social scientists seem to have felt their new responsibility especially keenly . . ." (p. 151). Psychologists were among the foremost in reiterating the need to base policy decisions on social science knowledge. Morawski and Goldstein (1985, p. 278) quote E. R. Hilgard as arguing (in a 1945 manuscript in the SPSSI archives) "Millions of dollars invested in social science research in the immediate future would be a small price to pay if the costs of war could be avoided." We would still like those dollars, but I think we are now more modest in our expectations.

As a spokesman for the social science establishment, the sociologist Neil Smelser has recently discussed the "kind of paradox" that emerged when he compared the pretensions and competences of the social sciences a half century ago and today. The old positivistic assumptions included

faith in the capacity of objective knowledge to identify social problems, faith in the capacity of cumulative social knowledge to result in social inventions, and faith in the capacity of those inventions to solve social problems. That particular set of faiths permitted [policy recommendations that were] simultaneously naive and pretentious—at least as judged by our contemporary understanding—about the role of the behavioral and social sciences in social policy I believe we have become, paradoxically, both more sophisticated in our research design and measures and less pretentious in our aspirations than we were 50 years ago. (Smelser, 1986, pp. 33–34)

The common understanding today in mainstream social science holds that the social sciences are embedded in the social and political processes of the society in a much more complex fashion than had previously been assumed. This is not to say that they do not have the potentiality for consequential influence. Indeed they do.

In the record that we have reviewed, the strongest case for actual influence on national policy concerns Bronfenbrenner's (1961) treatment of mirror-image perceptions and Osgood's (1962) GRIT proposal. Even if the Kennedy administration had arrived at its own version independently, at the very least the psychological analysis lent support to a way of thinking about Soviet-American relations that pointed toward a substantial change in policy, a change that by our current lights still makes sense. Even one such case in our record seems to me occasion for considerable satisfaction.

Note that the psychologists' contribution was not a direct conclusion from research data, though it was informed by research. The contribution was in the realm of *ideas*—a new way of looking at Soviet-American relations, from which new considerations of policy followed. This kind of contribution is *not* usually recognized in current discussions in the APA. Time and again in the recurring debate about APA's proper role in regard to controversial social issues, the point is made that the APA should get involved, and psychologists should get involved *as psychologists* (rather than just as citizens), *only when our contribution is based on research data*. With such issues it is more often than not the case that our greatest contribution is the conceptual one of framing the issues differently from what has become conventional, one of asking different questions more than of drawing different conclusions. Thus, Deutsch's (1983) formulation of the arms race as part of a malignant social process includes the mutual diabolical images of "evil empires" as part of its symptomatology. People, whether voters or policy makers, who have grasped this way of looking at things will be more likely to focus on what can be done about the process, less locked in tunnelvision of the reprehensible characteristics of their adversary. This kind of contribution is scientifically legitimate and it is by no means trivial.

A rich tradition of research underlies the formulation of good ideas such as these. Research can also play its usual role of *legitimizing* ideas and proposals—to our own internal constituency of psychologists and fellow social scientists, who need to be enlisted in the cause, and to policy makers when we can gain access to them. When he reports it in full, Janis's (1985) research on the quality of U.S. decision making in crisis management is bound to attract the attention of the intellectually minded stratum of the foreign affairs establishment—which has more influence in some presidential administrations than in others. The scrupulousness with which Janis designed his study is critical for its scientific legitimacy; under favorable circumstances, it should contribute to its political legitimacy too.

I have no objection in principle to the role of the psychologist or social scientist as technical advisor—I only wish government *would* seek our advice—but in fact social and psychological research has had very little influence along these lines on policies affecting war and peace, even in administrations far more favorable to the social sciences than the present one. In a more favorable political climate, psychology could certainly make useful technical contributions from research on the variety of topics illustrated in White's (1986) edited volume. Even in such happier times, however, I think our role in conceptual reformulation would be more important.

"In a more favorable climate?" I end with politics, because the whole topic of national and collective security, the arms race, and steps toward war or peace is intrinsically and intensely political. Psychologists who involve themselves with it, as I hope many more of us do, cannot avoid political involvement and commitment. There are political challenges within the APA to direct more of its organizational resources toward peace issues. There is local and national politics, where participation in SPSSI and in specialized organizations like Psychologists for Social Responsibility offers channels that should be expanded, but where the traditional routes of grass-roots organization and political pressure remain crucial.

Psychological and other social research on all the interconnected topics bearing on war and peace should be encouraged and supported to improve our general understanding of the complexities that policy must deal with—this in the long run for the guidance of the policy elite, if they will listen, and for the enlightenment of the attentive and voting public, which requires concerted effort to be reached. But a first, most urgent priority in the short run is to assure that there *is* a long run, an eventuality that cannot be taken for granted.

Preserving the long run means lending our personal support to political efforts to restrain the Reagan administration from acting on their primitive and romantic conceptions of peacekeeping in the mode of a John Wayne fantasy about the Western Frontier. It means exerting concerted pressure by phone calls, telegrams, and letters when each concrete issue is before Congress—Star Wars, the MX missile, the Nuclear Test Ban, whatever. It means supporting political efforts to build a Democratic Senate as well as a Democratic House of Representatives to hem the administration in. It means supporting political efforts to replace the Reagan administration with one more likely to give priority to deescalating the life-threatening global conflict. Of course, the APA cannot engage in this activity, nor SPSSI, but concerned psychologists can. To be a concerned psychologist implies becoming an active citizen in these respects.

Near the beginning of my talk, I noted our own need for empowerment, our need for a hopeful sense of efficacy if we are to be ready to open our eyes to the threatening dangers and do our utmost to avert them. I think the perspective that I have tried to share with you *is* potentially empowering. True enough, we have no

grounds for the fantasies of omnipotence that erstwhile accompanied the positivistic view of social science. As Freud well knew, however, omnipotence and impotence turn out to be identical. There are many modest things we can do that collectively can make a difference.

I take heart especially from the conclusion that psychologists have already made a substantial contribution to *thought* about nuclear war, international conflict, and the arms race—to reframing the issues so that current preoccupations with the diabolical mirror-image that go with continuing escalation drop from the central focus, and new questions come to the fore promising more hope for mutual security and goal attainment. Simply to communicate something of this emerging perspective far and wide would improve the political climate in which conflicts are managed for better or worse. To communicate it effectively, we ourselves must understand it in depth. In the course of this talk, I have made a number of suggestions about how those of us who have held off from involvement with the issue may inform ourselves.

Understanding and communicating with a view toward political influence is a role that we all can play. (Well-focused financial contributions toward political influence are also important, such as supporting the Council for a Livable World.) Those of us who have the inspiration and the opportunity to conduct relevant research should by all means do so, since in the long run, even if it cannot be expected to yield pat technical answers to inherently political problems, it is the basis from which our understanding gets corrected and enriched. There is no royal road by which psychologists can best contribute to peace. There are many paths, which should suit the different resources and opportunities of all of us.

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