Social Responsibility

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IF KURT LEWIN HAD DONE NOTHING ELSE during his too short lifetime but provide the amount of inspiration he did for the psychological study of social issues, his should be judged a highly successful life. Add to that all his influence toward sanity, and the infectiousness of his maturity, understanding, and generous tolerance of human frailties, and we clearly draw the picture of a man, truly a leader in terms appropriate to his time. Kurt Lewin was an explorer and pioneer in fields as beset with pitfalls for the unwary or ill equipped as ever were polar seas or tropical jungles. The reluctance of all of us human beings to know ourselves, the aggressions released by any attempt to help us to know ourselves truly, the antagonisms with which we defend our imbedded original premises, no matter how demonstrably fallacious they may be, are well known to all of us who have learned the lessons of the last half-century of pioneering work in these areas. Still, however, and probably for a long time to come, these human reactions are the great barriers to human progress in those very directions which are of the greatest importance to the whole race. In this area of human evolution there is still great need for unselfish devotion, for dedication to high principles, and even sometimes for a degree of martyrdom.

Kurt Lewin and his co-workers in the United States and in England have begun a process which should eventually contribute greatly to bringing the light of objectivity into the whole field of human relations.

Up until recently, through many generations of development, scientific progress has been almost entirely confined to those fields which would contribute directly to commercial or military advantage in a world functioning on the principle of competitive survival. Only in the last few years has it become clear to the people in all countries who are capable of thinking independently of the hysteria of the media of mass communication that this old method of competitive survival has become synonymous with racial suicide. Under the pressure of the anxiety engendered by this awareness the physical scientists have begun to show signs of developing some social responsibility, and the human scientists, some evidences of concern about the immediacy and importance of world problems of human relations and interhuman communication. The recent International Congress on Mental Health with its main theme of study, "Mental Health and World Citizenship," has been a most encouraging sign of this awakening concern. More than 5,000 people—psychologists, psychiatrists, social anthropologists, sociologists, educators, and others—participated actively in the preparation for that congress, many of them over periods of a year or more. There is no mistaking the urgency of the call which awakened this significant response and brought together in London more than 2,000 people from 54 countries to hear each other's ideas and share their experiences.

These are some of the signs of a changing orientation of science. In the past, science in its purer forms has been content to add to the sum of human knowledge; in its less disinterested preoccupations it has added to the wealth of those who already were in a financial position to subsidize scientific research—theoretically, all to the ultimate advantage of the human race. Only recently have scientists themselves begun to recognize that any increase of knowledge does not at all necessarily work to the advantage of the human race and to be willing, though reluctantly, to accept some responsibility for what is done with the knowledge they uncover. However, other agencies, civil or military, are not generally by any means ready to admit scientists to these sacred areas where business and politics worship the old gods of profit, prestige, and power. Generally, they are not yet ready to see that the exclusion of scientific attitudes from the field of human relations, while employing the full strength of scientific method in the material fields, may well destroy the human race in the not distant future. In spite of this natural reluctance to admit continuing failure and to call for help, and the inevitable defensive disparaging of the scientific attitude at policy levels, it becomes increasingly clear that the designing,

At meetings of the American Psychological Association, held in Boston in September 1948, the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues conferred on Dr. Chisholm its first annual Kurt Lewin Memorial Award. The recipient at that time delivered this Kurt Lewin Memorial Lecture. In introducing the speaker and conferring the award, Donald W. MacKinnon, of the Department of Psychology, University of California, stated that the SPSSI had established the award "to commemorate one who in his researches and in his professional activities exemplified the highest goals of the Society, and to encourage, through a recognition of their outstanding contributions, those who, like Kurt Lewin, in their work develop and integrate psychological research and social action." At the time of his death in February 1947, Dr. Lewin was director of the Research Center for Group Dynamics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

building, and operating of modern civilization requires techniques different from those of a generation ago. The builder of a prairie schooner is not qualified by his experience to design or build a turbo-jet aeroplane, nor could any of his contemporaries fly it. Many of our sociopolitical methods are reminiscent of the prairie schooner and pony express days, though the scientists have ushered in an era of instantaneous world communication, and potential world destruction.

To change the metaphor—our civilization, like a great ship, driven by the enormous power of its scientific development, is rushing on into treacherous and unreliably charted seas. The equipment of our pilots is far short of the best available. Their principles, their instruments, and even their charts are commonly inherited from previous generations and founded on folklore, superstition, faiths inculcated in childhood, prejudice, or even, much worse, on local political advantage. It is a fact that in other fields of governmental responsibility the best available experts are invariably employed to design, construct, and operate, whether it be a dam, a ship, an airplane, agricultural production, atomic bombs, a financial or accounting system, or anything else, except in the field of human relations. There, any kind of person may be used. Commonly lawyers are given these responsibilities; their training is in rules and precedent, one of the worst possible technical trainings for this work. Sometimes soldiers are taken from their normal business to be put in charge of our relations with other peoples; their training is in strategical and tactical maneuvering to gain predetermined ends at the expense of an enemy. The whole military training presupposes an opponent and teaches how to circumvent and defeat him, not how to cooperate with other kinds of people who are often as difficult and as sure they are right as we are ourselves. Clearly, military training is also one of the worst possible for this work. Business men trained to make profits or old-time diplomats trained in gentlemanly behavior and the classics are also obviously inadequate to the needs of interhuman relations on a world scale. It is true that a certain number of economists and sociologists in recent years have been given some work to do in the international field, but usually only as technicians or secretariats, to carry out the orders of governing bodies, and rarely on national and intergovernmental policy levels. Also, the training of sociologists and economists tends to concern itself almost exclusively with the study of human institutions and their functioning, not the study of human beings and their interrelationships.

The situation is illustrated by a glance at the position in just one of the agencies of the United Nations. For instance, while the Constitution of the World Health Organization defines health as "a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity" and states that "the healthy development of the child is of basic importance" and "the ability to live harmoniously in a changing total environment is essential to such development," at the First World Health Assembly, attended by representatives of some 68 nations, of which 55 are full members, so far as I have been able to find out there were no psychologists, no social anthropologists, and only one neuropsychiatrist included in national delegations totaling about 250. The one neuropsychiatrist was on the delegation of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. No other government felt the need of any technical information or advice in the field of mental health or human relations. This is a highly significant and important fact.

Of course, it is not to be taken for granted that any particular type of technical training now being given at any university would be useful specifically in this enormously important field of interhuman relations. The curricula in political science courses seem to be woefully inadequate to these responsibilities, as do those in psychology, psychiatry, or sociology.

It appears that the idea that the field of interhuman relations should be a major area for man's study and endeavor is not yet sufficiently accepted for any university to have developed a teaching course to train this type of expert. It may well be asked whether such a course could be given and whether there are people capable of teaching it. It is clear that something is known of the subject; social psychologists, social anthropologists, and psychiatrists have been working in that area, at least to some extent, for many years. It does appear, however, that their experiences have not properly been brought together into teachable form. Here is a job of the greatest possible urgency. It is to be hoped that enough demand will arise, from enough places, to insure that the World Federation for Mental Health and the World Health Organization will quickly undertake developmental work of this kind. The Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues could perform most valuable services in stimulating and helping to guide such developments.

It may well be claimed that all that is needed is the universal application of the ancient injunction to "love thy neighbor as thyself," which derives from the deep gregarious instinct of man and has been promulgated by most of the great religions. In practice such love has commonly been restricted, according to a locally acceptable definition of "neighbor," to the other members of the tribe or the color, racial, re-

ligious, or political group. The requirements for maturity and world citizenship may be called the Christian virtues, the Buddhist virtues, the Hindu virtues, the Mohammedan virtues, or the Confucian virtues, or may be ascribed to many other religions with about equal validity. They could even be called the "psychological virtues."

The catch in this old and widely supported injunction, "love thy neighbor as thyself," is in the last two words. The uncomfortable fact is that very few people indeed can love themselves in a healthy natural way which tolerantly accepts all their own human urges as normal and inevitable aspects of the healthily functioning man or woman. Most of us, by being civilized too early or too forcibly, have been driven to believe that our natural human urges are "bad," "not nice," "wicked," "sinful," or whatever the local equivalent may be. This is the dreadfully damaging concept of "original sin," which really only states that babies are not born civilized according to the local customs of the natives. In this latter form the statement is, of course, true and quite harmless, as long as it is understood by the child that he is not supposed to have been born civilized and, by permission of all legal systems, may take plenty of time about reaching that exalted state. Unfortunately, this is not understood by most children; they have been convicted of sin, believe they are "bad," and consequently deeply despise, distrust, and even hate themselves. The anxiety engendered motivates the projection of these feelings of despising, distrust, and hate on to other people, the neighbors, though usually distinguishable from oneself by some recognizable difference of race, color, creed, economic status, and politics.

The consequent aggressive feelings against such people are experienced as virtuous. It appears that a system which imposes an early belief in one's own sinfulness, or unacceptability in one's natural state, with its consequent inferiority feelings and anxiety, must be harmful to interhuman relationships and to the ability of the human race to survive in the kind of world this has become.

Unfortunately, the concept of "sin" is, under one name or another, very firmly entrenched throughout much of the world. Later in life the feelings which go with this childhood condemnation commonly are attached to thinking or other activities which would be disapproved by prevailing authority. Instead of "bad," one may be reproached with the terms "communist," "reactionary," "Nazi," "nigger-lover," or any of many other epithets. They all signify disapproval and are supposed to produce feelings of guilt and shame. This method of control has been used by all authoritarian systems throughout history to discourage any attempts to change or develop local concepts or customs. This whole method of control should be exposed and combatted by all scientific or mature people.

Let us look briefly at some of the immediate requirements that are not so obvious that no further research is needed to identify them. Much reliable work of recent years has indicated clearly that successful human relations start in infancy. We all know that babies need—not just want, but need—completely uncritical love, love whose manifestations are quite independent of the babies' behavior. In this situation only can the most desirable feelings of being wanted and loved and of "belonging" arise. It is also well known that this "belonging" feeling, in a successful developmental process, should spread gradually to include family, friends, and fellow citizens, and that in the little world this has become, it can no longer safely stop at national boundaries as it reasonably satisfactorily could until just recently.

Now the world must have, and soon, large numbers of people in every country who have grown emotionally beyond national boundaries and are sufficiently mature to be capable of being "world citizens." Up until now very few people indeed in any country have really developed emotionally even to a truly national degree of maturity. Such development to a national level requires an equal degree of concern for the welfare of *all* the kinds of people within the nation, irrespective of color, racial origin, religion, education, social or economic group, or even political party. Few people have reached even this stage of development, and yet only through this stage is it possible to develop to a degree of maturity in which there is a "belonging" feeling in relation to all peoples and an equal concern for the welfare of all of them. Very few such people have been developed, but it is clear that they are the prototype of what the world must have, in large numbers, before there can be any reasonable degree of assurance that the human race will survive for even another generation.

How can the development of this "belonging" feeling be ensured for as many as possible of the children now beginning their lives? It is already clear that they must experience unquestioning and uncritical love, and that they must be free of a "conviction of sin." What else must they have and against what else must they be protected? What are the needs of the growing child of school age, of the adolescent, of the young adult, which need to be met by the community in order that the best possible opportunity to reach real maturity may be ensured?

Next, the responsibility of meeting these needs must be broken down and allocated to the appropriate elements of the community. What do mothers, to be successful mothers, need to know about these matters,

and how should they apply their knowledge? What about fathers? What training should they have for their job? Who should provide the training for mothers and fathers, and when? An answer to this last question is easy: training of mothers and fathers ideally should begin when they themselves are children, but clearly we cannot wait for another two generations. This job must be got at at every possible point of contact. Margaret Mead recently stated that even grandparents can still learn. Many of them certainly can if they receive a little help and are given a chance to recognize their responsibilities.

What do school teachers need of this type of knowledge, and who is responsible for seeing that they get it? What are the responsibilities of town and city councils, of other local authorities, and of state, provincial, or federal governments, and how are local and national institutions to be made aware of these responsibilities and induced to accept them? What kinds of people are needed locally on boards of education or school boards? What should their qualifications be? What do members of city councils need to know about the development of children so they may carry their share of this responsibility? Is it conceivable that it could be generally enough accepted that members of parliaments and congressmen—even senators—need a certain amount of knowledge in this most important field of their responsibilities to the citizens who elect them? What should be the qualifications of legislators to be able so to direct the affairs of a country, particularly in relation to other countries, that the citizens whose lives are in their hands may feel some assurance that they know what they are doing and are working for the good of all the people in the world, the only basis on which it is reasonable to hope that the human race and our own children may survive?

Here are a few of the questions that need to be answered, not by individual research reported in technical language to scientific societies, but by cooperative work eventually reported in nontechnical language to the people of the world through their common channels of communication, the United Nations and its Specialized Agencies. Much of this has already been begun. The statement by the International Preparatory Commission for the International Congress on Mental Health is a notable contribution to these problems. Another significant move has been made by UNESCO's project on Intergroup Tensions, from which has come recently a very valuable report. Of course, these efforts, while tremendously important, are only beginnings. One of their great values is the indication they give that there are at least a few mature people, capable of cooperation in this most difficult of all scientific fields, in many countries.

A few fully mature people, even in the right places, are not enough. Even if all the councils of the United Nations and of its agencies were composed of such people, which they are not, they could still be only partly effective. The United Nations and its agencies are not run by their secretariats. All policies are decided by the governing bodies, executive boards, councils, etc., all composed of national delegations. Even now, many national delegations cannot behave in as civilized, mature, and cooperative ways as they know they should do and as they would like to do because of the certainty that such civilized, mature, and cooperative action would not be acceptable to their own governments or political chiefs. A national delegation cannot misrepresent its own people at home. If the majority of the population of a country is insular, or prejudiced, or antagonistic against some other nation, or aggressive, or just plain ignorant, its delegations in the councils of the nations must reflect those qualities in order to keep their jobs.

The United Nations cannot be blamed for the muddles they have made or their failures in human relations. These muddles and failures are the direct results of the muddled thinking of the people of the nations, of their prejudices, their unreasoned anxieties and hates, and their aggressive pressures. This situation cannot be cured, nor can it be much improved from within the United Nations Organization itself. The degree of our own infantility is illustrated by our desire to leave these responsibilities to our "father-equivalent," the government of our particular country or the United Nations. The reform must take place within the nations. Nor can such reforms stem from the national capitals, from the parliaments and congresses. No one can do this extremely necessary job but the people themselves, in the villages, towns, and cities of every country.

There is now only one basic importance in the world, the one importance on which the very existence of the race depends—the emotional relationship between the people of the world. Every political action in every country should be taken in the light of that fact. Whoever helps to elect anyone to any public office, in any country, on any other basis than his ability to improve the human relations of the people of the world, gambles with his own life and the lives of his children against, it may be, his hope of a job or of lowered taxes or of the satisfaction he might get in being on the winning side in a battle between political parties. Any or all of these things, weighed against the lives of the hundreds of millions of people the next world war, if it comes, will destroy, make a poor bet.

Our own personal responsibility to our fellow humans is clear. Whoever is reasonably informed in

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In Memoriam

Joyce Clennam Stearns

1893–1948

Joyce Clennam Stearns died at his home in Webster Groves, Missouri, on June 11. He had served as director of the Metallurgical Laboratory at the University of Chicago during the last year of the war and since July 1945 had been dean of the Faculties of Washington University in St. Louis.

Stearns was born in Meadville, Missouri, in 1893, studied Liberal Arts at Kingfisher College, took his Master's and Doctor's degrees in physics at the University of Chicago, and taught successively at Albion College and the University of Denver, where he was professor and eventually chairman of the Department of Physics. In the field of teaching, few physicists have earned as high a reputation as did Dr. Stearns. He was among the first to be drawn to Chicago in January 1942, when the atomic program was set up as an active war project.

The climax of his professional career was at Washington University, where, as dean of the Faculties he was the guiding spirit in rebuilding the staff after the disruption of the war.

Stearns' first major scientific work was a demonstration that magnetization of iron makes no considerable change in the positions of the atoms or the electrons of which the iron is composed. This result ruled out the older theory of magnetism, based upon the Bohr atom, according to which the electrons revolving in orbits constituted the elementary magnets that were oriented by the applied magnetic field. It was consistent, however, with the later theories according to which the electrons are themselves magnets that become oriented when the iron is magnetized. Stearns' experiment consisted of magnetizing a crystal of iron from which a beam of X-rays was reflected. He found that no change in the strength of the reflected beam as great as one part per thousand was caused by magnetization, whereas changes of several per cent should have been expected if the orbits in which the electrons revolved had followed the magnetic field.

Stearns also carried on several interesting experiments with cosmic rays, including tests of possible directional effect from the sun and of east-west asymmetry of cosmic-ray showers. His most notable achievement in cosmic-ray studies, however, was his establishment of the high-altitude laboratory on Mt. Evans, just west of Denver. Stearns secured the cooperation of the Denver City Parks in building a road to the top of the mountain and in preparing the site, and persuaded the University of Denver, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and the University of Chicago to cooperate with Mr. John Evans in building and maintaining the laboratory. He gave valuable aid to the many expeditions to Mt. Evans from several universities by offering his own laboratory at Denver as a low-altitude base of operations and by helping with the experiments in many ways. It would be a fitting tribute, indeed, to name the Mt. Evans laboratory after him.

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any aspect of human emotional-mental-social development, whoever can do something to clarify thinking even a little and very locally, whoever can help to remove a prejudice, soften a hate, increase the total of understanding and tolerance in the world, by that knowledge, training, insight, or ability is made responsible to do what he can in all possible places. Research is valuable but may remain sterile for long periods, and time is short. Erudite papers read to technical gatherings and published in technical journals have their important place, but may be futile unless appropriate action follows. Responsibility of the informed and technically qualified is to all people, not just to the enlightened.

The really noble example given by Kurt Lewin should continue to be an inspiration. His work and enthusiasm will continue to contribute greatly to present and future developments in the field of human relations. Some part of it can be carried on by every one of us.

Whoever can get at people in homes or schools or universities, in Parent-Teacher Associations, in Home and School Clubs, in youth groups, in churches or service clubs, by talking or writing, through lectures, radio, newspapers, magazines, books, or any other channels of communication, is obligated, by his ability, to serve the human race where he can to the limit of his equipment. Dare any of us say that he or she can do nothing about the desperate need of the world for better human relations?