

PSYCHOLOGY'S PAST IS PROLOGUE TO ITS FUTURE :
PLANNING FOR THE 21st. CENTURY

(DISCUSSANT'S COMMENTS)

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The history of psychology in each of the different countries is very interesting and informative. All too often in the United States we forget, or even worse, never realize, that psychology is important around the world, and that each country has a history of psychology that goes back many years. In looking at the past as it impacts on the future we can see certain similarities as well as differences. As pointed out by Dr. Carpintero, we can see the roots of psychology in philosophy and physiology. These ties still exist today.

The needs of each country and the historical events in the different countries have an impact on psychology as it has been allowed to develop. Wars and revolutions, as noted by Dr. Carpintero in Spain, have drastically affected psychology: interrupting it, changing its course, forcing psychologists to flee, etc. Other events affect the direction psychology takes. Is the government sympathetic or not? What kinds of funding are available for basic or applied research and for training of students?

The problems in each country impinge on psychology, including such issues as poverty, crime, health, the status of women, and concerns of ethnic minorities. Psychology has moved into applied areas as well as continuing to focus on research. One big issue affecting all of us in psychology is our concerns about nuclear war. Many psychologists around the world are using psychology to focus on the disaster of nuclear war and on the promotion of peace.

The problems facing psychology in countries around the world have much in common, as pointed out by Professor Ardila, including lack of funds, lack of public acceptance, and especially lack of communication. In Dr. Díaz-Guerrero's paper, he points out the lack of communication found even between researchers within a given field in Mexico. Dr. Haslam pointed out the lack of communication between the scientists and the "practitioners". The future must be one of greater communication and greater understanding and respect, among different fields of psychology within each country, between the "scientists" and "practitioners", and, of course, among the various countries.

Many of our problems are worldwide, and with better communication and dissemination and sharing of psychologists' knowledge, we can work together to solve these problems which are the problems of society generally. The growth in numbers of psychologists and in diversity and sharing of ideas through international journals, through international meetings and organizations can be a strength. Despite all our diversity we are all in the same profession and, therefore, we must create one psychology.