

PRESIDENTIAL REFLECTIONS SERIES**Making the World More Peaceful and Just**

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My engagement in SSSP, sociology, peace studies and conflict resolution has deep roots. I grew up in Chicago in the 1930s, a Jewish son of immigrants from Russia, hearing stories of anti-Semitism in Russia and experiencing some myself in my neighborhood. I was fascinated and appalled at the horrors of wars, in China and in Spain, and of Nazism in Germany. Then the terrible events of World War II confirmed my conviction that I had to help avert such calamities in the future.

After the War, I entered the University of Chicago, seeking to learn how to construct a more peaceful world. I discovered sociology and believed it could reveal how warfare might be controlled and prevented. I completed my graduate studies at the University of Chicago in 1953. My dissertation research found that patriotic considerations had little effect upon the business conduct of steel distributors during the Korean War.

For the next several years I researched matters that I thought were relevant to building peaceful relations. I studied transnational nongovernmental organizations as elements in a global society. With a Fulbright award in Germany, I examined the European Coal and Steel Community's impact on German nationalist attitudes.

During this period, as an Instructor at Columbia University, then as a Study Director at the National Opinion Research Center, and in my early professional years at Syracuse University, I taught courses and published research that were only tangentially related to peace making. The major research project in which I was engaged at Syracuse University assessed housing policies that might help people overcome their poverty. I worked with Irwin Deutscher, Charles V. Willie, S. M. Miller, and Seymour Bellin who also were active in the SSSP and helped form the supportive network that SSSP was for me.

New opportunities to do peace work in cooperation with others arose in the 1960s. My growing participation in SSSP lent support to doing applied work and to being engaged in social actions. Then in the late 1960s, with rising opposition to U.S. engagement in the war in Vietnam, sociologists joined together to examine the war and resistance to it. This was particularly the case in the congenial setting of the SSSP where the International Tensions Division was formed, which I chaired in 1969-1972. Later, a Committee on the Sociology of World Conflicts was established in the ASA by the Council; I was a member of it and of the Section that succeeded it. At last, I belonged to a community of sociologists who shared my conviction about the importance of doing research relevant to peacemaking. As is so often the case, social movement activism was creating new ideas and practices that stimulated the growth of new fields of analysis. It was true for peace studies as it was later true for conflict resolution (Stephenson 2008).

In the 1960s, I came to know many other sociologists who were doing work related to conflict analysis and conflict mitigation, including Norman Angell, Jessie Bernard, Elise Boulding, Randall Collins, Lewis Coser, William M. Evan, Amitai Etzioni, Johan Galtung, William Gamson, Allen Grimshaw, Irving Louis Horowitz, Morris Janowitz, C. Wright Mills, and Mayer Zald. In the 1970s, encouraged by Elise Boulding, I joined peace research communities outside of sociology and in

other countries, including the Consortium on Peace Research, Education and Development (COPRED) and the International Peace Research Association (IPRA). I also became active in the International Sociological Association and in its Research Committee on Armed Forces and Conflict Resolution.

In the 1950s and 1960s, a variety of seeds were planted in the emerging field of conflict resolution that began to flower and spread in the 1970s. Academics from many disciplines initiated publication of *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* in 1957. The Center for Research on Conflict Resolution was established in 1959 at the University of Michigan. The International Peace Research Institute, Oslo (PRIO) was founded in 1959 and it began publishing *The Journal of Peace Research* in 1964.

Drawing on many different areas of research, and more importantly of practice, the conflict resolution movement grew quickly during the 1970s. This was the case particularly in the areas of negotiation, mediation and alternative dispute resolution (ADR). In the 1980s, many research and teaching programs were initiated, greatly assisted by grants from The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. In 1986, I and a multi-disciplinary group of colleagues received a grant from the Hewlett Foundation to establish the Program on the Analysis and Resolution of Conflicts at Syracuse University. I was excited to be its founding Director and to work with faculty and graduate students who believed a more peaceful and just world could be built.

My own work has drawn from and contributed to this new conflict resolution field, focusing particularly on the Cold War and Arab-Israeli conflicts. I have analyzed how intractable conflicts can become transformed so that they are conducted and settled constructively and how struggles for justice can be effectively waged without resorting to violence. Inferences about effectiveness have been made by analyzing the conduct of officials and activists who were engaged in conflicts as partisans or as intermediaries.

A substantial field has been created and its ideas and practices can help prevent, stop, and resolve destructive conflicts (Kriesberg 2007a; Kriesberg 2007b). They are increasingly being implemented by young women and men who are working in many societies. They are helping adversaries to avoid destructive conflict eruptions, helping antagonists to stop using violence, and assisting people to recover from destructive wars. The end of the Cold War enabled the UN and other international organizations to actively intervene in major conflicts and help settle wars and avert destructive conflict escalations. Some members of contending parties have learned ways to avoid destructive escalations. Such developments have contributed to various noteworthy achievements, including the remarkably non-violent transformation of South Africa and the decreased incidence of civil and international wars in the 1990s (Human Security 2005).

The evolution of peace research and conflict resolution has been aided by new generations of sociologists, for example, Heidi and Guy Burgess, Pat Coy, John Crist, James Laue, John Paul Lederach, Lester Kurtz, Marie Pace, Brian Polkinghorn,

Gene Sharp, Anna Snyder, Hendrick van der Merwe, Paul Wehr and Lynne Woehrle. Exciting research is being done about conflict resolution applications in diverse kinds of conflicts, by different actors, at different conflict stages.

We can and should do much more to promote peace. Back in the 1950s, influential work was published about the military-industrial complex. Yet now, although that complex is even more extensive and powerful, there is little investigation of its extent and consequences (Johnson 2004). In the 1960s and 1970s a great deal of research was done about popular resistance to the U.S. engagement in the Vietnam War and in the 1980s to the intensification of the Cold War during the first years of President Ronald Reagan's administrations. Now, however, when the U.S. government has been conducting tragically wrong policies, there is little analysis of what resistance there has been and too little effort to explain why there has not been more (Mueller 2006). During the Cold War, consequential peace and conflict resolution work was undertaken on alternatives to the way the Cold War was being waged.

Such research and practices contributed to new thinking among Soviet leaders, which was crucial to the nonviolent ending of the Cold War (Evangelista 1999). But now, little work is being done about fundamentally better ways to conduct American foreign policies (Hastings 2004; Rogers 2002).

I conclude with reflections about the SSSP annual meeting of 1984, when I was President. The Program Co-chairs, Kathryn Ratcliff and Richard Ratcliff, planned the structure of the meetings with me and they oversaw organizing the sessions. I wanted to have a notable leader from the region address our plenary session, but the meetings were in San Antonio and I had little knowledge of the area. I wrote and called colleagues in Houston, Austin, Lubbock, and San Antonio for help; several suggested approaching Henry Cisneros, the mayor of San Antonio. He was also a Professor at the University of Texas, San Antonio and was to be a Visiting Professor at Trinity University; I also understood he was teaching urban sociology. I invited him to address a plenary session and he accepted, but with the caution that events might prevent him from attending. Oz White and others in San Antonio suggested I also invite Rudolfo de la Garza of the University of Texas, Austin and William C. Velasquez, of the Southwest Voter Registration Education Project, also in San Antonio. I did and they accepted.

They all showed up for the evening plenary on "Ethnic Issues in the Southwest," and delivered what was for me the finest panel presentation I would ever hear. I had already learned that these three men had worked closely together in overturning the political order long dominated by an Anglo minority. De la Garza gave a brilliant exposition of the findings from the survey research he had conducted for years about the grievances among Mexican-Americans and what they wanted fixed. Velasquez, looking like the community organizer he was, spoke with conviction and humor about how that information was used in going door-to-door and getting people registered to vote. They voted and elected Henry

Cisneros to be Mayor of San Antonio. Cisneros spoke with charisma about what his administration was doing and about what more could be accomplished. It was an exciting evening, demonstrating how research and activism together could produce substantial change.

I was thrilled by the plenary session, enjoyed my presidential address and appreciated my many friends. The friendships went back to graduate-student years at the University of Chicago, to years of working together at

Syracuse University and to many shared SSSP undertakings. The safety I felt enabled me to be fully engaged in my presidential responsibilities and also to grieve the death of my oldest brother Lee. Throughout the meetings, I knew he was dying and learned of his death as the meetings ended. The affection I experienced at the SSSP meetings comforted me at that time. Truly, I appreciate the many years the SSSP has been a base of support for me personally as well as a source of encouragement and intellectual stimulation for doing peace-relevant work.

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