

1986, 10, 247) I feel emboldened to make some further observations. Dr Stout describes our letter as “vociferous” and Dr Horrocks mentions “bluster and moving goals”. I have re-read our original letter (*Bulletin*, February 1986, 10, 36) with some care, and would ask other readers to do the same, to see whether this pejorative language is in any way deserved.

What we asked was whether the HAS has evidence for its strongly held beliefs. In reply, Dr Horrocks denies that his Service has any such beliefs: thus advice is not imposed, and appeals are not necessary. Our experience has been otherwise. The HAS Report seems to us to reflect a strongly held ideology that is unsupported by any very good evidence. In our case, the Report has been used by our DHA as justification for its present plans to reduce psychiatric beds at Withington from 189 to 105 beds: only 30 or so of these are to be replaced at another hospital.

Dr Horrocks protests that local considerations are given great emphasis by his teams. In our experience, and in the experience of the many NHS consultants who have chosen to write to me directly, this is not the case: the clockwork parrot strikes again. The particular local consideration given virtually no consideration by the HAS, by our NHS planners—and now, it seems, by one of our former students—is the necessity for a major teaching hospital to engage in teaching the subject. If Dr Horrocks is able to show where he took this need into account, let him pick up his pen for a third time.

I am naturally pleased to hear that Dr Stout has had good experiences with the HAS, and I am aware of others who can say the same. I never had the pleasure of having Dr Stout work on my Unit during his training: had he done so, he would have known that the second opinion work done by a Professorial Unit is to the advantage of both patients and consultant colleagues in the Region, and he might have learned to check his facts before rushing into print. Regular readers of the *Bulletin* may by now be forgiven for supposing that our own Department has more medical staff than Salford: this is not the case, as I mentioned in an earlier letter (*Bulletin*, April 1985, 9, 83). May I remind Dr Stout that if one constructs a national league table for manpower, then 31 mental illness hospitals have more consultant staff, and 88 hospitals have more nursing staff, than ourselves: in each case his own service is well above ours in the list.¹

Dr Stout should save his sympathy for colleagues in the Standard DGH Units of the North West, who are severely under-resourced—as I have pointed out with supporting figures.² The remedy for such under-provision is not to weaken services in areas that have allocated a reasonable proportion of their resources to mental illness, but to put pressure on DHAs with poor services to divert resources into mental illness.

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²GOLDBERG, DAVID (1986) Implementation of mental health policies in North West England, in *The Provision of Mental Health Services in Britain—The Way Ahead* (Eds. G. Wilkinson & H. Freeman. London: Gaskell (The Royal College of Psychiatrists) see esp. p. 63.

‘The Wisdom [sic] of Deterrence’

DEAR SIRS

As a former Professor of Psychology in other Universities and a Member of the General Council of the University of Edinburgh, and as an Associate of the RMPA/RCP of some 30 years’ standing, may I be permitted to comment upon the article, ‘The Wisdom of Deterrence’, by Dr Ian Deary (*Bulletin*, July 1986, 10, 165–168).

One is stunned at the psychological objectivity that can discern analogies with men’s nuclear weapons in sheep’s horns (bighorn sheep, admittedly), and with multilateral nuclear disarmament in children’s cake-sharing theory (?); that can think in terms of an “0.04% for a cruise missile”, and of “a critically low level of warheads”; that can see the fact that “both sides accepted that each had the potential and the willingness to destroy each other’s civilisation” simply as a “refined concept”—and not as evidence of psychosis or psychopathy. But it is impossible to overstate the trivialisation which Dr Deary has brought to this, the major issue of our time. The level and tenor of his article are those of a schoolboy debate.

Dr Deary (paragraph 1), kicking off with an unwarranted assumption and red herring (Dr Dyer was writing in his own personal capacity, of course, as is Dr Deary), passes on the most frightful and frightening instance ever of the *post hoc ergo propter hoc* logical fallacy (viz “the policy of deterrence has kept the peace in Europe for 40 years”), together with a complete irrelevance (‘supported by every British government since the end of the 1940s’) and an outdated statistic (‘still supported by the majority of the British electorate’—this is even less true of the Scottish electorate).

After trying to score with a cheap jibe (paragraph 2), Dr Deary proceeds to criticise Dr Dyer not for what he has said but for what Dr Deary *thinks* he *should* have said. It is he himself who misses the point about costs, while selectively ignoring, for instance, the research and development costs of nuclear weapons, and deploying unstated and unwarranted assumptions, non-sequiturs and statistics without sources (that we would need such a high level of “conventional strength”, that we would have to reintroduce conscription if nuclear weapons were to be discarded, that nuclear weapons cost only 10% of the British defence budget, and so on).

By mid-way through page 166, we are into such arrant sophistry as to defy detailed comment. Both content and style have gone awry. Non sequiturs (e.g. that the realisation that there would be no winner in a nuclear war supports the policy of deterrence) and unwarranted assumptions (e.g. the nonsensical bit about Utopia; that we need to

specify some 'System X' as an alternative to deterrence; that Salter's system would be acceptable to the powers-that-be; that all of the various and variously sited (including continuously and unpredictably moving sites) nuclear weapons are neatly divisible into "proportions" of "percentage" [sic] points) jostle for space with outrageous question-begging ("most of the caring and intelligent people" etc.), superficial play upon words (referring to some philosopher, Kenny), misuse of words (e.g. "logic", "proofs", "pseudopsychiatric"), tautology, double-think, self-contradiction and self-abasement before arbitrary authority (Churchill!).

'The Logic of Deterrence' and 'The Wisdom of Deterrence' are in fact the Pseudopsychology of Deterrence. It is a policy based not only upon a major logical fallacy (*vide supra*) but also upon an archaic, speculative, verbalistic psychology (as demonstrated by Dr Deary). By its very nature it springs from fear. But what exactly is it that inspires such terror in people that they would prefer "certain suicide" (Dr Deary's own words) and the destruction of humanity to life for all under a government controlled to a greater or lesser extent by the USSR (unlikely as this would be, even if we were to disarm)? What sort of human beings are they who would, *whatever the circumstances*, unleash nuclear holocaust upon their own kind—or even only threaten to do so?... Here is a psychological question, a psychiatric question, beside which all the problems dealt with in the College's *Journal* pale into insignificance.

For some more relevant statistics, Dr Deary should look at more recent American surveys. For example, in the year President Reagan was re-elected, half of America thought they would be safer if the US simply stopped trying to halt the spread of communism; 56% favoured an arms control agreement even if perfect verification were impossible; over 60% would have liked a unilateral freeze for six months; 84% thought it wrong to use a new weapon to bring the Russians back to talk about arms control, with reference to the President and the MX missile. In this country, of course, opinion is moving even more strongly against nuclear weaponry.

For some more apposite quotations, Dr Deary should turn to Thucydides—"No one is kept out of war by fear"; or Edmund Burke—"No passion so effectually robs the mind of all its powers of acting and reasoning as fear"; or President F. D. Roosevelt—"The only thing we have to fear is fear itself"; or Earl Mountbatten on nuclear weapons—"Their existence only adds to our perils because of the illusions which they have generated. There are powerful voices around the world who still give credence to the old Roman precept—if you desire peace, prepare for war. This is absolute nuclear nonsense and I repeat—it is a disastrous misconception to believe that by increasing the total uncertainty one increases one's own certainty."

Although he admits that "we cannot assume that we can survive even one error in our system", Dr Deary does not attempt to deal with the whole problem of human error, which might easily lead to holocaust, or with, say, the effects of the West's introduction of first-strike nuclear weapons.

But surely to: "It is more likely that nuclear weapons are the crystallisation of system wisdom, albeit a deeply regrettable wisdom" and "Paradoxically, deterrence rests on the love of an administration for the safety of its own people"... defies belief.

That readers may discount my own personal bias, perhaps I should admit that, when I was a redundant bomb-aimer on the Staff of Air HQ (Disarmament), BAFO just after the war, I had a Russian batwoman.

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'Psychoanalysis: Science or Nonscience'

DEAR SIRS

"Pooh began to feel a little more comfortable, because when you are a Bear of Very little Brain, and you Think of Things, you find sometimes that a Thing which seemed very Thingish inside you is quite different when it gets out into the open and has other people looking at it."

I have been following with interest 'Psychoanalysis: Science or Nonscience?' (C. R. B. Mathers) and the subsequent correspondence (K. P. Ebmeier and R. M. A. Brown). I agree broadly with the authors' conclusion but certain points need answering.

Popper's contribution to the Philosophy of Science cannot be underestimated and the author questions his stress on "falsification" as the criterion for Science. It has been often mentioned but it is worth repeating that Karl Popper saw refutation as a solution to the "problem of induction" which has plagued philosophers since Hume first raised it. Scientists, according to an empiricist, infer general truths from particular observations and experiments. Put simply, it is difficult to see how a finite number of observations can establish the truth of a general law which would be applicable universally to all cases in time. Popper tried to solve this by his theory of the logic of science. He concluded that the problem of induction was insoluble, but was equally irrelevant to the question of scientific knowledge. There is no logical path leading from observation to scientific laws. What is important, however, is not how the theories are arrived at, but the questions of how the theories are to be tested. Popper disputed that facts can ever conclusively verify a theory and broke away from the "verificationism" of the 'positivists' who assumed that the only valid proposition is one that is scientifically verifiable and value judgements and normative statements do not qualify as knowledge. Popper argued for a strict logical deductive reasoning and considered "refutations" of falsification as the essence of science. No amount of sightings of white swans would prove "all swans are white" but one sighting of black swans would refute it. Popper's solution has its critics and it has been pointed out that certain theories can be falsified according to Popper's criterion (e.g. Kepler's laws) whilst others (e.g. Newton's laws) cannot be falsified in this way, but can in some sense be confirmed by successful