

Letters

Science and the Race Problem

The article "Science and the race problem" by a committee of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in your issue of 1 November (*Science* 142, 558) is a classic in begging the question, a phrase which I understand to mean using as a part of one's argument the point which remains to be proved. This article assumes that there is a "civil right" to school integration hidden in our Constitution and recently discovered by the Supreme Court in the *Brown* case, whereas the whole debate concerns the validity of the discovery.

It is totally incorrect to say that a "principle of equality" is embodied in the Constitution. The 14th Amendment refers to "equal protection of the laws," but nowhere in this Amendment, nor anywhere else in our national charter, is there any support for a concept of social or biological equality. The "principle" which the AAAS committee dwells upon simply does not exist. Jefferson, who wrote the Declaration of Independence and coined the phrase "all men are created equal," made clear how far he would have applied this to White-Negro relations when he said: "Nothing is more certainly written in the book of fate than that these people [the Negroes] are to be free; nor is it less certain that the two races, equally free, cannot live under the same government." We may surmise what he would have thought of sending them to the same schools.

The committee errs also when it states that "there is nowhere in the Supreme Court decision an appeal to science that relates to the nature and the origins of racial differences." The finding of psychological injury to Negro children in *Brown* is based upon evidence which has now been shown to have been misinterpreted by the chief witness in that case. The evidence actually proves that integration injures the Negro more than segregation [*Stell v. Savannah Board of Education* 220 F. Supp. 667 (S.D. Ga. 1963)]. So the question immediately follows: Can this injury, which is due to an awareness of

lower capacity, be overcome by contact with White children and the prolonged environment of White schools? And that answer in turn depends upon whether the Negro's limitations are environmentally or genetically conditioned. Public policy might conceivably justify the forced intrusion of Negroes into White schools, and the attendant turmoil, if the Negroes' limitations were due to environment and were temporary. By no possible argument can it be justified if these limitations are genetic and permanent. Hence W. C. George's material goes to the very heart of the legal problem.

I pass quickly over the accusation by the committee that George has failed to offer his "results and interpretations for open publication." *The Biology of the Race Problem* is almost entirely a collection of the views of scientists other than George, views which have been published again and again in scientific books and journals, as may readily be seen from his footnotes. The report itself was too long to be published in a journal, but it was printed and sent by mail a year ago to hundreds of scientists throughout the United States and abroad. To my knowledge no scientist has yet answered it on its merits, nor does the committee attempt to do so.

Let it be said once more that the cumulative and converging evidence from the fields of genetics, anatomy, physical anthropology, and psychology is overwhelmingly on the side of George. Any implication to the contrary in the committee's article is a falsehood. Indeed, instead of asking why George has not offered his material for "open" publication, we may well ask why the committee has not offered *their* material in court. George testified under oath and "opened" himself to cross-examination in the *Stell* case. I do not believe any equalitarian scientist dares to follow his example. The latter simply reiterate a position which George has shown to be untenable without attempting to answer his arguments or evidence. Their repeated evasions are getting to be a farce.

Finally a comment is required on the

committee's statement that there has been no suppression of evidence in the area of genetic racial differences. The committee says: "A scientist can obscure the truth about a scientific question only by keeping silent about what he knows, or by otherwise obstructing the publication of scientific results." I now quote in part a letter received by me from a scientist who was head of the department of psychology at a large eastern university for 15 years: "I knew Franz Boas personally. I was able to observe the influence of Boas as founder of the science of anthropology in America and to evaluate the extent to which Boas' socialistic ideology dominated his thinking and permeated the teaching of his disciples, first at Columbia and later at other universities fed from the Boas cult. I was also able to observe the increasing degree of control exercised by this cult over students and younger professors until fear of loss of jobs or status became common in the field of anthropology unless conformity to the racial equality dogma was maintained. . . . I can testify from repeated personal observation to the intimidation and to the pall of suppression which has fallen upon the academic world in the area of which I speak. It encompasses not only anthropology but certain other related sciences."

I quote further from another letter whose author must remain unidentified but whom I can state to be a full professor of psychology in a large university: "It is with regret that I must decline this opportunity to express again publicly my belief in this matter [genetic racial inequality]. Letters, telephone calls, and threats after my testimony in — were not favorable nor encouraging. Further exposure in the press could destroy any value that might come from my research now in progress and that which is planned for the immediate future."

And I will cite again the case which I mention in *Race and Reason* of the prominent scientist whom I visited at his home in a Northern city and who asked me, after I had been seated a few minutes in his living room, whether I was sure I had not been followed. Such an atmosphere may not be entirely created by scientists, but it certainly has the effect of keeping scientists silent about what they know.

Altogether "Science and the race problem" is a tissue of fallacies and confusion put forward by men of no special qualification in the pertinent disciplines of anatomy and physical

anthropology, who have acted with transparent political motivation. The timing with which the article was picked up and distorted by the general press denotes careful pre-arrangement on which I suppose the committee is to be congratulated.

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The report should receive an award. It contained fewer data to support its generalizations than any contribution I have ever seen published by you heretofore.

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Distribution of Research Funds

I take issue with you concerning the influence of the institutional name in securing government research funds [*Science* 142, 453 (25 Oct. 1963)]. I cannot agree . . . that the name of the institution sponsoring the research has important bearing on decisions by all granting agencies concerning grant support.

I base my disagreement on my personal experience as a member of a panel at the National Science Foundation for 2 years (1960–62) and as a program director for 1 year (1960–61) in the same agency. This panel at all times bent over backward and was indeed prejudiced in favor of able investigators at the smaller institutions. The majority of its members would demand more from equal talent at a well-staffed institution than from isolated talent. . . . I cannot understand your statement that “we could not in good conscience produce a different result,” since it was a relatively simple matter for our panel to be prejudiced in the opposite direction. . . .

DANIEL BILLEN
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I am deeply distressed to see your prestige added in support of a specious and, I think, dangerous argument. . . . The two ways you propose of distributing research funds more equitably are (i) judgment without consideration of institution and (ii) direct grants to institutions.

In recommending the second, you assert that excellence will not suffer. The fate of excellence will depend

upon the ability of the local committees to allocate the money judiciously. . . . If local decisions are less sagacious than those of national study sections, then excellence must certainly suffer.

A research proposal to a local committee will typically encounter either of two principal alternatives. Either the committee will not contain anyone in the field of the proposal; in this case, with all else equal, the committee will tend to defer to the member from a related field—a zoologist may judge a psychology proposal, and so on. Or the committee will indeed contain a scientist from the proposal field, and then, not too surprisingly, will tend to defer completely to the expert. Judgment is thus rendered either without an expert or, what may be even worse, by a single expert. . . .

You ascribe an additional virtue to your proposal—that it will allow the institution a greater voice in decision, which you offer as a *prima facie* good. First, do not individuals now decide their own research topics, and is not decision by the individual to be preferred to decision by any institution? . . . Second, local institutions, more than study sections, are susceptible to influence by factors inimical to basic research. For example, a governor decides that the industry which his backward state sorely needs will be attracted by a strong engineering college at his state university; thereafter, funds have a way of going to engineering. They are not so routed because of the concentration of able people; more nearly because of the opposite. . . . Indeed, the opening next door to a needy university of a cookie factory would make calculable the slight interval of time before the arrival of the first basic research proposal—“Factors of nutritive value in pastry flour”—a proposal which could not but do well with the dean. . . .

Because science has attained a sufficient market value to appear by name in the budget of federal aid to the states, there is a pressure toward equitable distribution. . . . But how compatible is science as a striving of an individual for excellence within a culturally agreed-upon form, with science as a vehicle for state aid? It would seem profoundly risky to divorce science from its internal criteria so as to hand it out according to the criteria of veterans hospitals and bridges.

DAVID PREMACK
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. . . Funds to encourage and support research should be distributed more broadly, but a funding mechanism not involving study section analysis and decision should be employed. Different criteria should be used to determine how other and additional funds might be distributed. . . . The study section as it functions now should continue and should recognize excellence and vote support for it, irrespective of the origin of the application.

GUSTAVE J. DAMMIN
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I appreciate your editorial very much. The scientific fraternity must itself support vigorously alternatives to the present system of project-type grants, which fails to develop the mass of colleges and universities and probably unbalances the programs of the few who get substantial grants.

CHARLES E. KELLOGG
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. . . There is one hard cold fact. There is a difference in the quality of investigators at certain preeminent universities and [those at] other schools in parts of the nation which, as communities, may be less stimulating intellectually. This is the nature of the beast and the root of the problem. . . .

ALFRED M. BONGIOVANNI
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If the “smaller” schools are to receive a proportionate share of available research funds and if this “equitable” allocation of funds is dependent, to a large degree, upon the excellence of the institution, does it not behoove such schools to become “excellent” first? Or is it necessary for an institution to be well endowed with grant funds before it can become “excellent”? There are many institutions, not of the size of an M.I.T. or a Harvard, that are quite well equipped with both brains and hardware and that can, and do, carry on creditable research programs. . . .

I am disappointed that you found it necessary to prod congressmen into looking at grant funds as another source of pork-barrelling and another opportunity for political shenanigans. Scientists have felt blessed in that politics have, heretofore, played little or no role in the allocation of grant funds to