

AAUP and Report on Race

The University of Alabama-Birmingham Chapter of the American Association of University Professors hereby endorses the findings of the AAAS Committee on Science in the Promotion of Human Welfare as set forth in their statement "Science and the race problem" [*Science* **142**, 588 (1963)]. Sincere politicians would do well to have recourse to such recognized professional organizations or their spokesmen when it is felt that scientific advice has a role to play in the formulation of law or in molding social attitudes.

UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA—
BIRMINGHAM CHAPTER,
AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF
UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS

Humanities Foundation

In the discussions of the proposed National Humanities Foundation (31 July, p. 449) one important factor is left out by humanists and scientists alike. The present prosperity of science began during and after World War II when it was realized that scientific research had material value for the country. It could provide better national defense, better health, and better business and agriculture.

I think the only reason that the American people and their elected representatives are willing to support science on such a magnificent scale is that they feel that science provides practical benefits for the country. It is realized that there is some basic research which does not provide direct practical benefits, but it is accepted anyway. Humanistic studies cannot provide anything as tangible as science can, and in the eyes of America's citizens they cannot ever be on a par.

Of course, a large proportion of the basic research is not aimed at any practical aims and is comparable to linguistic, philosophical, and other humanistic studies. Support of such research is essentially support of higher education and general scholarly achievement. Perhaps instead of creating a foundation specifically for the advancement of humanistic studies, a National Research Foundation should be established to take over the support of basic research in the sciences now handled by many different government

agencies and to support humanistic studies. This would also have the virtue of eliminating the dishonesty of supporting projects which really have no relation to the missions of the supporting agencies and would assure the public that money earmarked for defense or agriculture or health would be spent for defense or agriculture or health and that sums allocated for scholarly pursuits will go for those ends.

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As a citizen (and incidentally a scientist) I find it hard to swallow a National Humanities Foundation. Surely we need more of the arts in the United States; but do we really need more intensive research into the arts?

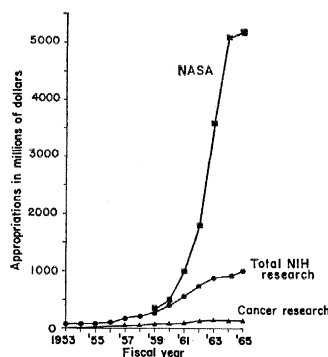
A National Repertory Theatre—yes. Government support for more and better sculpture in our ugly cities—yes; for murals instead of billboards—yes; for poetry instead of jingles—yes; for subscription television—yes. But further prod the humanity professors to ape the scientists?—Oh No.

Would not N.H.F. research grants just further dehumanize the humanists? Would it not be wiser to pay them to read in hammocks, or climb mountains, or do whatever they darn please during their summers?

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NASA and Cancer Research

In connection with the analysis by D. S. Greenberg of the political base underlying NASA (10 July, p. 137), it may be helpful to examine also the effect of NASA appropriations on other scientific programs. The graph shows clearly that at about the time



that the NASA budget passed the \$2 billion a year mark, the orderly growth in medical research supported by the National Institutes of Health was impeded. Cancer research appropriations were actually reduced, so that the 1965 appropriations for cancer research are even lower than those for 1962. It is, of course, possible that these relationships are mere coincidence. However, I doubt it.

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Need for Scientist-Administrators

The recent article by E. G. Mesthene, "Can only scientists make government policy?" (17 July, p. 237) fails to clearly recognize two different roles of scientists in government. The one which he discusses is that of the scientist as a contributor to government policy, that is, to the determination of broad social and political goals toward which science and technology contribute in an important manner. The role which he does not discuss explicitly is the role of the professional scientist or engineer in the management of the \$15 billion a year federal research and development enterprise, which accounts for about 15 percent of the total federal operations. Although Mesthene raises some legitimate questions regarding the necessity of having scientists directly in control of making broad policies, there is little question that it is both proper and necessary that scientists and engineers manage the research and development enterprises (including the determination of the policies for the management itself). Thus, for example, the decisions to undertake the manned lunar exploration program, or to support a supersonic transport, or to initiate a large-scale program on water desalinization are of broad social and political importance and, although the scientists should clearly participate, they should not necessarily be in charge of making the decisions. However, once the broad policy is determined, the management of the lunar program, the supersonic transport program, or the desalinization program should properly be the responsibility of professional scientists and engineers.

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