

Inside HEW: Women Protest Sex Discrimination

The Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) is a massive conglomeration of agencies trying to fill the cradle-to-grave needs of all Americans. Increasingly, however, HEW is facing charges of not even meeting the 9-to-5 needs of its own employees.

Nearly two-thirds of HEW's 102,000* employees in Washington, D.C., are women, a higher percentage than any other cabinet-level department, and dissidents among them complain that HEW systematically relegates them to "second-class" status. Although blacks in HEW have gained by using confrontation tactics, women employees so far have been apprehensive about defying department officials. Secretary Elliot L. Richardson has been more responsive to employee demands than his predecessor Robert H. Finch, particularly since blacks staged a sit-in last December which resulted in 52 arrests and a lot of unfavorable publicity. Richardson seems to be testing a different approach on women: several women interviewed said they think he may be trying to divert the ire of his female employees and avoid further embarrassment by making token concessions before dissatisfaction spreads.

To satisfy some of the women's demands for equality, HEW last March established a Women's Action Program (WAP), which Richardson defined in a 17 February memo to assistant secretaries and agency heads as a program which "will assist me in meeting my commitments to women in HEW, as well as to the growing issue of women's rights and responsibilities in the society." In fact, the program lacks sufficient resources and people to do much original research or the authority necessary to play more than a passive advisory role in the making of program and policy decisions that affect women. Members of WAP—although they did manage to squeeze in occasional "consciousness-raising" sessions with department employees of both sexes—spent

most of the program's first 6 months writing recommendations for the Secretary based on the extremely sparse sex-differentiated data which now exist.

Some WAP boosters say there are indications that President Nixon's 5 percent cutback in government employment will be used as an excuse to reduce the program's capabilities further. WAP's initial 6-month budget of approximately \$100,000 did not even cover the salaries of the 15 women involved full-time, and it is debatable whether the program can get as much for the next half year. Xandra Kayden, 31, who joined HEW in 1969 as a management intern in education after completing work for her master's degree at Columbia University, gave notice months ago that she planned to return to graduate school on 15 September, but her replacement has not yet been named. After at least two female administrators with proven records of doing something for women expressed interest in the director's job, HEW reportedly downgraded the position from a proposed GS-17† (salary \$32,546 to \$36,886) to GS-15 (\$24,251 to \$31,523) in order to discourage them. Bernice Sandler, who, as spokeswoman for the Women's Equity Action League (WEAL),‡ filed specific charges with HEW against 250 universities, abandoned the firing line earlier this year to become WAP's deputy director for policy—but her activism was even less appreciated internally than it was outside HEW. She left HEW in August. Furthermore, most of WAP's first members were detailees who returned to their regular HEW jobs in September, leaving only a handful of women to keep WAP alive until Richardson decides where the program is going. He is reportedly considering separating women employees' concerns from external

† Kayden has been serving in the WAP program as a consultant with a salary approximately equivalent to that of a GS-12 (\$15,040 to \$19,549).

‡ WEAL was incorporated in 1968 in Ohio to promote greater economic progress on the part of American women and to seek solutions to economic, educational, tax, and employment problems affecting women. There are members in more than 34 states.

problems of women and placing the former under HEW's Equal Employment Opportunity office (EEO). If past experience with including women's problems under EEO is any indication, such an action could be a decisive setback to the department's women.

The success of the women's movement within HEW depends largely on the women employees' determination to effect change. Right now, even WAP members seem content to let male administrators define their movement for them. Women's leaders throughout the department—many of them white, middle-aged, middle-class professionals—stressed the "official," "moderate" nature of their efforts in interviews with *Science*. Many became defensive at the suggestion of a link between WAP and the national women's liberation movement because, while they are committed to upgrading women's employment status, they are leery of a movement that may involve further changes in their relationships with men. Few of the HEW women scientists interviewed were willing to discuss personal grievances with a reporter, preferring to limit themselves to generalizations; and those who talked about themselves agreed to do so only on the condition that their names be withheld.

Even if WAP had all the support needed to deal with the problems of HEW women, the problems they face are monumental. Women comprise 63 percent of all HEW employees, but they are concentrated in the routine, dead-end jobs below the GS-9 watershed mark, and they are paid accordingly. The higher the salary and status of an HEW job, the more likely it is to be filled by a man. About 89 percent of the agency's women hold ratings of GS-9 and below, and their proportion declines steadily from grades 11 through 16. The median grade for all women in HEW is 5.2 compared with 10.9 for men—a difference of 5 grades. There are only four women among the 75 HEW employees with grade 17 civil service ratings, and no women among the 19 with GS-18 ratings. Of 21 persons specifically designated as top executives in HEW, Patricia R. Hitt, assistant secretary for community and field services, is the lone woman. In some individual agencies within the department, women are even less visible among upper-echelon employees. For instance, there are no women above grade 15 in the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

* HEW employees in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area totaled 101,977 as of 1 July; nationwide, they totaled 442,111.

HEW's 344 public advisory committees of nongovernmental experts, more than half of which serve NIH, are also characterized by a paucity of women. At NIH, for instance, there are only 105 women among the 1939 members of the various advisory groups, which shape the course of extramural research affecting both sexes. The only NIH committees on which women predominate are the seven concerned with nurses' training, according to a survey by Florence Moog, a zoology professor at Washington University, St. Louis, Mo.

A limited supply of women scientists in the United States, due to well-documented discrimination in higher education, as well as other factors, explains why the female-male ratio in the 11 to 18 grade range at NIH is considerably lower than the 50-50 one might reasonably expect. Actually, NIH employs more than its share of the available women scientists. Nevertheless, the inadequate supply argument fails to explain why the proportion of women declines progressively between grades 11 and 15, or why women's share of positions in the grades usually assigned to lab technicians (GS-7 to GS-9) is 67 percent, while in the grades usually reserved for top administrators (GS-16 and up), it is 0 percent. Nor does it account for Moog's calculation that 2.8 percent of NIH's extramural advisers (excepting those on nursing committees) are women, while 7.5 percent of all Ph.D. scientists and 7 percent of all doctors in the United States are women.

Regardless of rank, HEW women, like most women in the U.S. labor force, perform "mainly the long-accepted 'serving' jobs: clerks, secretaries, nurses, staff assistants, and occasionally a 'deputy chief' of something. Positions of real program responsibility and authority—with few exceptions—are held by men." §

Although comprehensive data on specific agencies, such as NIH, are unavailable, small-scale studies and the experiences of individual women interviewed suggest certain patterns. There are proportionally more professional women scientists in the agency's extramural division than in its intramural division. In the extramural sector, professional women tend to work as intermediate-level scientist-administrators. Women are mainly technicians in the intramural laboratories, although a se-

lect few do research. A disproportionate share of NIH's high-ranking women are in the Division of Nursing.

Joy Hochstadt-Ozer, a guestworker at NIH from the American Heart Association, told *Science* that a study she conducted on a sample of 596 National Heart and Lung Institute employees shows that, in general, there is "a 2 to

3 grade difference between men and women with the same education and service time." The median GS rating for women with Ph.D.'s is 13 (salary \$17,761 to \$23,089), whereas for men with Ph.D.'s, it is 15 (\$24,251 to \$31,523).

Those women who do climb to the higher grades rarely wield authority as

HEW Advisory Jobs to Go to Women

Almost all upcoming appointments to HEW advisory committees will be filled by women, if HEW officials take to heart a strongly worded memorandum issued on 29 September by Secretary of HEW Elliot L. Richardson. The committees covered by the directive include the 181 advisory committees—staffed by some 2000 scientists—which advise the National Institutes of Health on the funding of research and training in health-related fields.

The new directive updates a 4 June memorandum in which the Secretary urged HEW officials to pay heed to the importance of hiring more women. The new statement is more pointed:

"At least one woman shall be appointed to each advisory committee by December 31 if there is a qualified woman available for appointment. Substantial representation of women shall be deemed to be one female for every two males. Assuming qualified women are available to fill vacancies, at least one-third of all nominees or appointees for committees shall be women."

The document instructs HEW officials to make monthly progress reports to Edward Henley, III, the committee management officer for HEW.

The directive stipulates that "all advisory committees shall have a substantial representation of women as soon as possible." But it offers what would appear to be a loophole for those advisory committees—including many of the NIH committees—that deal with technical matters; "This definition shall not apply to appointments to technical level advisory committees if it is determined after substantial efforts at recruitment that sufficient women are not available in a given field of expertise."

Ronald Lamont-Havers, Associate Director of NIH for Extramural Research and Training, says that for several months, NIH has been looking at the issue of female representation on its advisory boards and is keeping lists of women scientists who might qualify for vacancies. He says that the goal of one woman for every two men on NIH committees cannot possibly be achieved by 31 December. Committee members serve for 4-year terms; hence only one-fourth of the membership terminates each year.

Julia Apter, professor of surgery at Rush Medical College and a women's rights activist, estimates that, exclusive of women on the nursing panels (who are, by and large, nurses rather than academic or industrial scientists), only 48 of the 181 NIH scientific advisory committees have women as voting members. A total of 52 women currently sit on the panels, a decline from her head count of 141 women 3 years ago.

Apter also estimates that 499 positions on these committees have or will become vacant at some time during 1971. Of these, 254 have been filled, but only 9 of them by women, and about 13 by other minority group members. She says, 245 vacancies remain unfilled. Barring any loopholes, the new Richardson directive could mean that these prized seats will go to women scientists.—D.S.

§ Taken from an unpublished 8 July 1969 HEW report entitled "Equal Employment Opportunity for Women."

directors or chiefs. For instance, only one of the intramural laboratory chiefs at NIH or the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) is a woman, and only two women now serve as branch chiefs in the institutes' extramural divisions. Jane Wilcox, now with the Florida State Health Department, told *Science* that she left her job as acting chief of the extramural Cardiac Diseases Branch 2 months ago, after 20 years with NIH, because she realized she was only filling the job until a man could be recruited to replace her. "They told me the reason I couldn't be chief was that they needed an M.D. [she holds an Sc.D. (doctor of science degree) in epidemiology], but the man who replaced me is not an M.D. Also, he has had less than 1 year's experience at NIH and is 10 to 15 years younger than I am." Two other women scientists who are still employed in the institutes related similar experiences during interviews.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) provides another example of the problems women encounter when they aspire to decision-making posts. In the FDA's 17 field offices, there are no women among 90 top managers and supervisors. When one field office designated a woman as acting supervisory inspector recently, every man under her called in sick, according to Charlotte Gallogly, the agency's detailee to WAP, who said she heard about the incident at a conference last summer.

Among the reasons women don't tend to become policy-makers in HEW is that they lack the experience often required, said Elsa A. Porter, chief of the department's Manpower Planning and Staffing branch. At NIMH, for example, where experience as a laboratory section chief is usually prerequisite to an internal promotion to lab chief, women account for only two of the current 40 section chiefs. A few women get administrative experience in the institutes' extramural programs, such as NIH's Division of Research Grants, but they usually are assigned to head impotent service units. "Where do you go from Claims Review Section Head, Property Utilization Section Head, or Shipping Unit Head?" asked one high-ranking NIH woman.

Women also miss out on special training opportunities at federal institutes, conferences, or seminars, Porter said. The experience of one high-ranking female doctor at NIH indicates the deep-seated prejudices that bar women.

The M.D. said that about 2 years ago her lab section head recommended her for a slot in a top-level administrative training program, pending approval by her institute. "What does *she* want it for?" was the selector's immediate and only reply, she said. He never even bothered to interview her, she said.

Women scientists whose highest priority is to do laboratory research in their specialized fields often have to choose that over advancement in the bureaucracy. Although the same problem faces men scientists, it is more acute for women. A female Ph.D. who has worked in one NIH lab nearly 17 years, told *Science* that the one time she requested a promotion from grade 13 to 14 she was turned down. "He [her lab chief] knows I'm not likely to leave," she said. "Lab chiefs are very much aware that women tend to follow their husbands and, therefore, are not likely to leave for jobs in other parts of the country. Many men in my position probably would have left, but I can't afford to push too hard. I probably could get a promotion by going over to Grants or FDA, but right now I don't want to spend a lot of time reviewing applications."

Another woman Ph.D. in an NIH lab said she had to take a grade cut in order to land her job there. "I was simply informed that it was very bad I was a woman," she said. "They promised to raise my grade back from 11 to 12 in a year. Eight years later, I finally did get my 12 back—and I'm still a 12."

Maternity Made Difficult

HEW guarantees very little assistance to career-minded women in the form of maternity benefits, day care, or part-time employment opportunities, said WAP member Ruth Krubit. "There is no such thing as maternity leave," she said, although a woman may use up to 26 days of combined vacation time and sick leave (if she has it coming) to have her child. Her supervisor willing, she may take up to a year's leave without pay, but after 14 weeks the Civil Service Commission does not guarantee her job back as it does men entering the military service, she added. Also, according to Krubit, the time HEW women take for maternity leave does not count toward promotions or retirement benefits as does the time most male employees spend in the military.

HEW's two day-care centers, both demonstration projects that opened this

year, provide developmental care for a maximum combined total of 110 children of Washington employees. One center's waiting list of 200 children attests to a greater need, and some HEW women are advocating that the department offer day care as an employee benefit, like health insurance. However, Krubit said that a December 1970 memo from the Office of Management and Budget directed department heads not to spend salaries and expense money for day care.

Part-time employment is formally available to a total of 40 professional women, under a program called the Professional and Executive Corps, although only 20 of these slots are now filled. A WAP survey shows that a total of 1324 women and 266 men work at HEW on a part-time basis, but most of them are clerk-typists and secretaries. According to Porter, "An extremely rigid accounting system, based on estimates of full-time, permanent employment, makes it difficult to extend part-time opportunities to large numbers of professional women."

Theoretically, with such programs as EEO and Upward Mobility, there should be no need for a separate program to deal with women's employment problems. But both EEO and Upward Mobility were originally designed for blacks, who enjoy higher political priority than women in HEW, and the blacks who administer both programs place little emphasis on women's concerns. Samuel M. Hoston, a black who heads EEO, was assigned responsibility for developing a women's program 3 years ago, but a former EEO staff member said virtually all he did in that capacity was joke about being "the official sex coordinator." Hoston admits that his program, which employs about 800 persons throughout HEW's various agencies and regional offices, has traditionally focused on black concerns, but he contends that he has never had enough staff or money to do much for women. James A. Robinson, vice-chairman of the \$20-million Upward Mobility program's steering committee, told *Science* that, although he considers the women's issue important, his priority, as a black male, is "to strengthen the black family unit by providing a strong male breadwinner."

HEW women's advocates ask where that leaves black women, who, together with other minority members of their sex, comprise 75 percent of all the department's minority employees and 32

percent of all its women. In terms of status, it leaves them concentrated at the very bottom. Nearly half of HEW's minority workers are in grades 1 to 4 and 85 percent of these are women. In terms of the officially sponsored advocacy structure, it leaves them outside.

Interviews with black women at HEW indicate that, in general, they see WAP as a program conceived by white women to promote white women's interests. As Marion E. Primus, a young, black, social science analyst detailed to the Women's Action Program from

NIMH, analyzed the situation: "You don't have a heavy concentration of blacks involved in women's action because many feel they have to deal with their blackness first. Some say: 'Hell, what good is this to me? Let me get up there where they [white women] are, first.' As a mental health professional, I am perhaps more interested in the Women's Action Program that I would be otherwise."

One of the most critical obstacles to achieving equity for HEW's women is the preconceived attitudes of both sexes

about the role of women. Expressed attitudes of men at the managerial and supervisory levels make women's rights advocates particularly angry. Estelle R. Ramey, a Georgetown University professor of physiology who occasionally addresses NIH women's meetings, related a couple of typical comments men there have made in responses to her remarks: "One man told me he never discriminates against hiring a woman in his lab," she said. "As he put it: 'I've always said you get more talent for the buck. Women are usually will-

Briefing

Science Censored

In *The Medvedev Papers*, a book already published in Britain and about to be printed in the United States, Zhores A. Medvedev,* the Russian biochemist, gerontologist, and critic of the Soviet regime, writes that hundreds of foreign scientific journals are routinely censored by Soviet authorities. In particular, *Science* goes through an editing and copying process before it reaches subscribers.

After a long and ingenious experimentation with the Soviet post offices, customs bureaus, the national censorship agency (Glavlit), and other official bodies, Medvedev deduces that there exists, as there did in the days of the czars, a "Black Office" where several hundred employees doctor some 500 English, French, German, and American periodicals.

Medvedev uses *Science* as his prime example. Sometimes an entire issue is plucked from circulation. The censors also clip out articles, or paste an advertisement from a back issue over undesirable portions of the text. They purge the table of contents of offensive titles—but often forget to delete them from the quarterly index. The doctored issues are photocopied, then sent on to subscribers and libraries—as much as 7 months late. Medvedev says an office called the All-Union Institute of Scientific and Technical Information—apparently a wing of the "Black Office"—performs this surgery on each issue.

* Z. A. Medvedev, *The Medvedev Papers: The Plight of Soviet Science Today* (Macmillan, London; St. Martin's Press, New York, in press).

(Medvedev is known to Western scientists for his work on the problems of aging and also as the author of *The Rise and Fall of T. D. Lysenko*,† the manuscript of which was smuggled from Russia and recently published in the West. In 1969 Medvedev was dismissed from his post as head of the department of molecular radiobiology at the Institute of Medical Radiology at Obninsk for ideological reasons. In June 1970, he was diagnosed by state psychiatrists as schizophrenic and confined to a medical institution, an experience he tells about in a yet unpublished manuscript, "A Question of Madness." The doctors who confined him dubbed his ailment "the Leonardo da Vinci" syndrome, or the attempt to do science and what they termed "publicism" at once. His imprisonment brought such an outcry from other scientists that he was released. He is now posted at the Laboratory of Proteins and Amino Acids at Borovsk, near Moscow.)

Soviet censorship of foreign journals is more cunning now than it was under Stalin, he says. Then "the censorship cut out what did not please it, but the rest of the scientific contents was retained for use. The approach was crude but commonsensical. Later on, there were no more such cut-up journals and I thought that this was the end of the censorship. . . . Then suddenly I discovered that . . . the censorship was not only removing certain notes with the aid of the scissors but even depriving the reader of the whole journal with all its positive scientific content, just so as not to show the censor's face. . . ."

Medvedev describes the censor's methods of "mutilating" *Science* in de-

tail, even suggesting that it is cut up and reproduced simply to keep the censors working at an even rate. He obtains four uncensored 1967–1968 issues and compares them with the censored, surrogate versions. He calls the deletions "senseless and inexplicable."

The bulk of the censored articles, he finds, are on science policy and mainly found in the "News and Comment" section. He points out that these are often critical of the U.S. government and that Soviet authorities ought to find this stance congenial instead of censoring it. He concludes simply that they don't want Soviet scientists to know just how green the grass is on the other side of the Iron Curtain. In Russia, he says, scientists are kept ignorant of the government science budget and not allowed to discuss it openly.

Also censored are other innocuous items such as the "Association Affairs" section reporting on the internal business of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and two paragraphs from a book review on psychology in which the term "scientific materialism" is used.

Medvedev says flatly that government censorship of *Science* and other journals is retarding Soviet science and worsening the "chronic" lag between Soviet science and that of other countries.

At the present time, among the 160,800 addressograph plates that are used to send *Science* out each week, 39 are addresses inside the Soviet Union, and one of these is that of Comrade Medvedev. But as he has now told us, the *Science* mailed from Washington and the *Science* which (sometimes) reaches his doorstep are two, rather different, publications.—D.S.

† Columbia Univ. Press, New York, 1969.

NEWS & NOTES

● **PERIPATETIC PITFALLS:** The case of traveling NIH scientists and their extramural expense allowances (*Science*, 8 October) has gained some prominence with the personal intervention of Elliot L. Richardson, secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, who last week issued an uncharacteristically strong statement decrying the "real or apparent financial windfalls" that current practices allow. Referring to the recent disclosure that Edward F. MacNichol, Jr., director of the National Institute of Neurological Diseases and Stroke, has been collecting a daily allowance of \$25 while summering at Woods Hole, Massachusetts, Richardson said, "I am totally unable to condone this practice from the viewpoint of the standards of propriety and sensitivity to the public interest which all federal employees are bound to observe." He directed all HEW undersecretaries to review the travel policies and procedures in their departments, and has indicated he expects a new set of regulations to emerge. Meanwhile, the House Subcommittee on Intergovernmental Relations, headed by L. H. Fountain (D-N.C.), has asked the General Accounting Office to check out the activities of all NIH scientists who have been absent from Washington for periods of 2 weeks or more at government expense since January 1970. The list of these scientists, furnished to Fountain by NIH, contains the names of around 100 researchers, including that of DeWitt Stetten, Jr., director of the National Institute of General Medical Sciences. Stetten acknowledged that he, too, spent 2 months of nonvacation time this year on Cape Cod, but said he was not paid a per diem.

● **NEW SCIENCE INTERNSHIPS:** The White House has announced a new program of presidential internships in science and engineering, part of its effort to keep the nation's current overload of scientists and engineers afloat until better days return. The Labor Department has made available \$3 million, to be distributed on a 50-50 matching basis to federally funded laboratories across the country, for the support of over 400 1-year internships. Presidential science adviser Edward E. David says the new jobs, which will be related to problems of pressing social concern, will be particularly appropriate for scientists under 30.

ing to come in at lower grade levels than men.' Another one told me: 'Frankly, I am less comfortable working with professional women than men.' But I noticed he has a lot of women lab technicians working for him."

Although Richardson seems more sympathetic to feminist concerns than many men under him, several HEW women noted that his sensitivity is recently acquired. Only last year he publicly made a remark about women (facetious, he later claimed) that he probably wouldn't have dared make about blacks. During a meeting with young management interns, Richardson said he would hire a woman for an upper-grade position if one applied; but it was his impression that women did not want his responsibility. He cited as evidence that he hardly ever saw women on commuter flights.

As for the White House, one way to measure the attitude toward women is by looking at the President's record on women's appointments. The number of HEW women in grades 16 to 18 increased from 12 as of 1 May 1971 to 15 as of 1 August 1971; during the same period the number of HEW men in the same grade range increased from 358 to 372. Many employees in GS-16 to 18 slots are presidential appointees, and all in that range require political clearance. Elsewhere, Nixon's record for appointing women is equally undistinguished. For example, although he claims to have named 200 women to advisory groups, he fails to add that 61 of these are on a single committee—the Advisory Committee on the Arts of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. The President did issue a memo on 21 April 1971 directing all heads of executive departments and agencies to develop and enact by year's end plans to increase the number of women in positions classified GS-13 and above and the number of women on public advisory committees. But, noting the President's new economic policies and the fact that his memo is moot on any action beyond December, several veteran HEW women interviewed said they interpret it as an empty, last-minute gesture to camouflage his abysmal record on women's appointments until election day 1972.

Women's attitudes about themselves also hinder them from asserting themselves as men's intellectual and professional equals, because society does not consider aggressive behavior "feminine." Most women in the department have remained silent on the women's

issue so far, but that does not mean they don't have problems. Many women misunderstand the discriminatory oral practices operating against them. "It also depends on how they define discrimination," Ramsey observed. "If you see yourself as a researcher in a lab under a great male scientist, and he treats you well, then you don't think you're discriminated against; but, if you think you should have the same options as men with similar talents and experience, then you realize you are. Equality in job situations will come when female mediocrity moves along at the same rate as male mediocrity—not when a female Einstein makes it." Some women who have fought their way up through the thicket, and, in some cases, come out with jobs comparable to men's, feel that, if they could overcome the hardships, younger women should be able to also. These women sometimes have a negative image of their sex and refuse to be associated with other women in women's groups. Increasingly, however, well-respected and highly qualified women are becoming involved. For example, membership in the National Institutes of Health Organization for Women, an independent advocacy group composed mostly of professional women employees, has grown from a handful to 300 during its first year.

This month, WAP is recommending formally to Richardson that the program be continued as essentially an advisory group, according to Kayden. "We don't want to be women doing things for women, but a catalyst to change the system, so that women can have an equal opportunity to participate within it," she explained. The advisory approach she outlined is similar to that tried by blacks in the early days of EEO, Hoston commented, "and we found it didn't work. You have to get involved in the making of program and policy decisions."

Perhaps the most potent force undermining the HEW women's movement is fear of reprisal. Not only the silent women, but also movement leaders throughout the department, share the fear that they will be labeled "troublemakers." The vocal women have been emboldened by the Secretary's official endorsement of WAP, which makes it respectable to organize and express one's concerns. But it is doubtful that, at this time, the momentum of the HEW women's movement could sustain itself independently. That could change.

—JUDY CHASE