

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE

Science serves its readers as a forum for the presentation and discussion of important issues related to the advancement of science, including the presentation of minority or conflicting points of view, rather than by publishing only material on which a consensus has been reached. Accordingly, all articles published in *Science*—including editorials, news and comment, and book reviews—are signed and reflect the individual views of the authors and not official points of view adopted by the AAAS or the institutions with which the authors are affiliated.

Editorial Board

ROBERT L. BOWMAN	EVERETT I. MENDELSON
JOSEPH W. CHAMBERLAIN	NEAL E. MILLER
JOHN T. EDSALL	JOHN R. PIERCE
EMIL HAURY	KENNETH S. PITZER
ALEXANDER HOLLAENDER	ALEXANDER RICH
WILLARD F. LIBBY	DEWITT STETTEN, JR.
GORDON J. F. MACDONALD	CLARENCE M. ZENER

Editorial Staff

Editor

PHILIP H. ABELSON

Publisher

DAEL WOLFLE

Business Manager

HANS NUSSBAUM

Managing Editor: ROBERT V. ORMES

Assistant Editors: ELLEN E. MURPHY, JOHN E. RINGLE

Assistant to the Editor: NANCY TEIMOURIAN

News and Comment: DANIEL S. GREENBERG, JOHN WALSH, ELINOR LANGER, LUTHER J. CARTER, MARION ZEIGER, JANE AYRES

Europe: VICTOR K. McELHENY, Flat 3, 18 Kensington Court Place, London, W.8, England (Western 5360)

Book Reviews: SYLVIA EBERHART

Editorial Assistants: ISABELLA BOULDIN, ELEANORE BUTZ, BEN CARLIN, GRAYCE FINGER, NANCY HAMILTON, OLIVER HEATWOLE, ANNE HOLDSWORTH, KONSLYNNIETTA HUTCHINSON, KATHERINE LIVINGSTON, DIRGHAM SALAH, BARBARA SHEFFER

Advertising Staff

Director

EARL J. SCHERAGO

Production Manager

RAYMONDE SALAMA

Sales: New York, N.Y., 11 W. 42 St. (212-PE-6-1858): RICHARD L. CHARLES, ROBERT S. BUGBEE
Scotch Plains, N.J., 12 Unami Lane (201-889-4873): C. RICHARD CALLIS

Chicago, Ill. 60611, 919 N. Michigan Ave., Room 426 (312-DE-7-4973): HERBERT L. BURKLUND

Los Angeles 45, Calif., 8255 Beverly Blvd. (213-653-9817): WINN NANCE

EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE: 1515 Massachusetts Ave., NW, Washington, D.C. 20005. Phone: 202-387-7171. Cable: Advancesci, Washington. Copies of "Instructions for Contributors" can be obtained from the editorial office. ADVERTISING CORRESPONDENCE: Rm. 1740, 11 W. 42 St., New York, N.Y. 10036. Phone: 212-PE 6-1858.

Government Support for Social Science

A number of congressmen have become interested in developing better policies to govern relations of the Federal Government to the social sciences. A White House conference has been proposed, as has an Office of Social Sciences parallel to the Office of Science and Technology. A National Social Science Foundation, similar in organization and purpose to the National Science Foundation, has been recommended and was one of the topics discussed at recent hearings held by the Senate Subcommittee on Government Research (*Science*, 8 July 1966). Another bill before Congress proposes to assign to the National Science Foundation greater responsibility for increasing research competency in the social sciences.

The current interest arose in part from the Camelot affair and the resulting criticism of the Defense Department as an inappropriate agency to support social science research, particularly research carried out abroad. Some of the critics seem to forget that the military services have filled a gap that other agencies should have filled but did not. How lopsided the situation has become is shown by 1966 expenditures. Of \$25 million spent by the U.S. Government on social science research abroad, the Department of Defense provided \$12.5 million, while the Department of State provided only \$200,000.

Policies concerning support and administration must be based on an understanding of why the Federal Government spends public funds on research in the social sciences. The reasons are exactly the same as those for supporting research in other areas: because it is good public policy to increase national research competency; and because the results are expected to help solve problems of broad public concern.

As for the first reason—fostering increased research competence—the National Science Foundation seems likely to be more effective than a separate agency, for the trend in science is toward a narrowing rather than a widening of the gaps separating different fields.

As for the second reason—usefulness—the historian Henry Steele Commager has drawn a parallel between the problems that troubled society during the industrial revolution and those that trouble society today. Considering the use and abuse of technology during the industrial revolution, it was humanistic values, he said, "and the practical efficiency of the social sciences which combined to provide partial solutions of these problems," and then, turning to the problems that now beset the world and the current uses and abuses of science and technology, added: "... the social sciences are called upon to perform once again, on a world scale, and for ultimate stakes, the tasks which they performed so well in the [19th century]."

The responsibility of the several agencies concerned with these problems is analogous to that of other agencies that find research useful in accomplishing their missions. The Department of Housing and Urban Affairs, the Agency for International Development, the Department of State, and other agencies that deal with major social problems should be marching up Capitol Hill asking for larger funds for research to enable them to do their jobs more effectively in the future.

Support and active involvement of the National Science Foundation and the relevant mission-oriented agencies will serve better than would a separate agency to keep the social sciences in close touch with other sciences and with the practical problems they can help solve. Compartmentalization in a separate agency is neither the best means of strengthening the social sciences nor of serving the Federal Government.

—DAEL WOLFLE