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NEWS AND COMMENT

Study of TV Violence: Seven Top Researchers Blackballed from Panel

The Surgeon General's Scientific Advisory Committee on Television and Social Behavior—a high-level group that was appointed to investigate the impact of television violence on the behavior of children—has become embroiled in controversy. Prominent behavioral scientists have charged that the committee is "loaded" in favor of the broadcasting industry, and even the committee's own research coordinator expresses doubt about the objectivity of the panel. But Robert H. Finch, Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, has defended the procedures by which the committee was chosen, and he has publicly proclaimed that the government "was looking for individuals without a previous commitment to one side of the controversy or another."

The dispute stems primarily from the way in which the committee of 12 members was appointed. The broadcasting industry was allowed to veto the appointment of potentially hostile critics, and at the same time, the industry was given prominent representation on the panel. Critics contend this almost inevitably means that the committee is biased toward the industry viewpoint. One of the committee's own staff members—Douglas A. Fuchs, the senior research coordinator for the investigation—believes that "the scientific independence of this study has obviously been subverted to some kind of political consideration."

The current dispute is the second major controversy to arise in recent years concerning appointments to advisory committees in the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW). Last year *Science* revealed that prominent scientists were being barred from HEW advisory committees for personal and political reasons unrelated to professional competence, and the department subsequently announced administrative changes designed to eliminate the controversial "blacklisting" practices (*Science*, 9 January 1970). This latest controversy over the television committee is not directly connected with the earlier blacklisting incidents, but it raises similar questions as to whether appointments to HEW scientific advisory groups are being made in an objective manner.

The television committee was appointed last year as the result of congressional concern that televised violence might be having an adverse effect on viewers, particularly children. In March 1969, Senator John O. Pastore (D-Rhode Island), chairman of the Senate Subcommittee on Communications, wrote to Secretary Finch asking him to direct the Surgeon General to appoint a committee "to devise techniques and to conduct a study . . . which will establish scientifically insofar as possible what harmful effects, if any, these programs have on children." President Nixon affirmed his support for the study,

and the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) was made responsible for supporting the functions of the committee.

The mission of the committee is to study the effects—both positive and negative—of television on social behavior, but a committee report states that the investigation will "focus on the effects of televised violence on the behavior, attitudes, development and mental health of children." The study is to be confined to scientific findings and the committee will make no policy recommendations. Indeed, Finch from the start has stated that if the study reveals any adverse connection between televised violence and the mental health of children, then corrective action will most likely be taken by the broadcasting industry on a voluntary basis. Unlike most such high-level committees, this one will not simply review the existing literature; it will develop and sponsor a number of original research projects and has a budget of about \$1 million earmarked for this purpose.

The selection of the committee—the issue over which controversy has arisen—was performed within the Department of HEW and its constituent agency, NIMH. Eli A. Rubinstein, assistant director for extramural programs and behavioral sciences at NIMH, told *Science* that the government first tried to develop a comprehensive list of candidates for the committee by soliciting recommendations from professional associations, from the broadcasting industry, from various consultants, and from the staff members at NIMH. A list of 40 names was eventually developed. This list was then sent to the three major television networks—CBS, NBC, and ABC—and to the National Association of Broadcasters for comment. The industry was asked to identify any persons on the list who, in industry's opinion, could not provide impartial scientific judgment

of the matters to be considered by the committee.

The industry was not promised that any objections it might raise to a candidate would automatically disqualify him, but as a matter of fact that's the way it worked out. The industry vetoed seven of the 40 candidates and all seven were therefore dropped from the list. Full details are not available, but the industry does not seem to have presented a united front. One source close to the situation states that CBS chose not to veto anyone on the grounds that it should be the Surgeon General's prerogative to choose his own committee. The other industry spokesmen agreed unanimously that three candidates should be rejected and between them also raised objections to four others.

Names of Those Rejected

The seven rejected candidates included:

Albert Bandura, professor of psychology at Stanford, who has published research indicating that children become more aggressive after watching violent films.

Leo Bogart, executive vice president and general manager of the Bureau of Advertising of the American Newspaper Publishers Association. Besides representing a rival medium, Bogart has published a book on television.

Leonard Berkowitz, professor of psychology at the University of Wisconsin, who has also published research indicating that aggressive films provoke aggressive behavior.

Leon Eisenberg, professor of child psychiatry at Johns Hopkins Medical School.

Ralph Garry, professor of educational psychology at Boston University, publisher of a book on television for children, and a former consultant to the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Juvenile Delinquency.

Otto Larsen, professor of sociology at the University of Washington, editor of a book on violence and the mass media.

Percy H. Tannenbaum, professor of communication and psychology at the University of Pennsylvania, who will shortly take up a position at Berkeley. (Ironically, Tannenbaum, though excluded from the committee, is slated to perform the largest single research project financed under the committee's \$1 million research budget. He was picked for this assignment by the staff, not by the committee.)

After eliminating these seven names

from the list, the staff at NIMH and HEW then culled through the remaining 33 names and picked 12 to serve on the committee. Rubinstein states that a particular effort was made to appoint representatives from various disciplines and from differing geographical areas. As it turned out, five of the 12 appointees have close ties with industry. Two are directly employed by the networks, namely Thomas E. Coffin, vice-president of NBC, and Joseph T. Klapper, director of social research for CBS. Three others are either serving as consultants to industry or have previously been employed by or consulted for industry. These latter include Ira H. Cisin, professor of sociology at George Washington University and Harold Mendelsohn, director of the Communication Arts Center at the University of Denver, who are both consultants to CBS; and Gerhardt D. Wiebe, dean of the school of communications at Boston University, who was formerly a CBS research executive.*

Oddly enough, no complaints seem to have been made about the committee's composition when the members were first announced on 3 June 1969. But last February Edwin B. Parker, associate professor of communication at Stanford, was invited to attend a meeting of the committee in Palo Alto. He became concerned that some prominent investigators seemed inexplicably missing from the committee while employees or consultants of the television industry were prominently present. Parker eventually conveyed his concern and his questions to Senator Lee Metcalf (D-Montana), a Stanford alumnus, and Metcalf wrote to Secretary Finch requesting a report on the situation.

In a letter to Metcalf dated 22 April 1970, Finch explained that while HEW does not generally give industry an opportunity to review nominations for membership to an advisory committee affecting that industry, it has made two exceptions to that general policy in the past 5 years. One was the Surgeon General's Committee on Smoking and Health. The other was the committee on television that is now under attack. Finch said that in each of these cases

* The other seven members include Irving L. Janis, professor of psychology at Yale; Eveline Omwake, chairman of the department of child development at Connecticut College; Charles A. Pinderhughes, associate clinical professor of psychiatry at Tufts; Ithiel de Sola Pool, chairman of political science at M.I.T.; Alberta E. Siegel, associate professor of psychology at Stanford; Anthony Wallace, chairman of anthropology at the University of Pennsylvania; and Andrew S. Watson, professor of psychiatry and of law at the University of Michigan.

industry was allowed to express doubts about the scientific impartiality of potential candidates for the committees in question. "It was probable in each case that the report of the advisory committee would contain substantial criticism of the industry," he explained, "and it was felt that to *protect the Government* (emphasis his) from the charge of establishing a biased committee, whose recommendations would be suspect, the industry should be given the opportunity to identify any individuals whom it felt were not impartial."

Finch said the television case involved the added issue of First Amendment guarantees of freedom of the press. He said this made it "essential that the Government be protected from any possible charge that it was intimidating the broadcasting industry."

Actually, the handling of the smoking and television committees does not seem to have been completely parallel. In the case of the smoking committee, veto power was given not only to the tobacco industry, but also to such other interested parties as the American Cancer Society and the American Heart Association. As a result, the smoking committee did not contain any representatives directly employed by the tobacco industry and, presumably, included only investigators regarded as neutral by the contending parties. But in the case of the television committee, there was no outside group in a position to veto the industry representatives.

Industry Help Needed for Research?

When *Science* asked Rubinstein of NIMH why industry employees were placed on the television committee but not the smoking committee, he replied that there is a crucial difference between the jobs to be performed by the two committees. The smoking committee merely reviewed the voluminous existing literature, but the television committee, because the relevant literature is smaller and probably even more in dispute than was the smoking literature, will have to sponsor original research. Rubinstein said that in developing a suitable research program it was deemed desirable to have the active cooperation and collaboration of industry. Based on the committee meetings he has attended so far, Rubinstein expressed the belief that "all the members have worked extremely well and have been concerned exclusively with the scientific rigor and quality" of the investigation. "Up to now it is my belief that the committee has acted without bias," he said.

NEWS IN BRIEF

A similar vote of confidence was expressed by Nicholas Zapple, counsel to Senator Pastore's subcommittee, which originally sparked the appointment of the committee. "I don't think there was any intention to create favoritism for or against the television industry," Zapple said. "They tried to get an unbiased panel. The proof will be in the pudding—how they develop the thing, what kind of studies they do. We have to be fair and see what they come up with. So far I believe they are proceeding properly."

But a number of behavioral scientists are not so confident. Fifteen fellows at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford signed an open letter earlier this month protesting "irregularities" in the appointment of the television committee.† The fellows urged Finch "to adopt procedures to ensure that HEW scientific advisory committees include all major relevant viewpoints. . . . We find particularly objectionable procedures that exclude one side of a controversy."

A Dangerous Precedent?

Parker told *Science* that some investigators seem to have been barred from the committee because they had concluded on the basis of their research that "viewing of televised violence does not lead to catharsis of emotions and a consequent lowering of aggressive tendencies." Parker warned that such an appointment procedure "constitutes a dangerous precedent" which "may be used to the detriment of the public interest in future cases involving drugs, safety, pollution or other such issues."

Two psychologists suggested that the Surgeon General's committee was experiencing problems similar to those which Ralph Nader has spotlighted in the federal regulatory agencies. "I feel it's part and parcel of the problem of federal regulatory bodies," said Eleanor Maccoby, professor of psychology at Stanford. "Somehow spokesmen for industry gain influence in them." Similarly, James J. Jenkins, chairman of the board of scientific affairs of the American Psychological Association, called the appointment process "deplorable" and added: "It looks like an exemplar of the old story of the 'regulatees' running the 'regulators' or the fox passing

† The signers included Edwin B. Parker, Stanford; Luvern L. Cunningham, Ohio State; Melvin Small, Wayne State; George M. Foster, California; Edwin S. Shneidman, NIMH; James F. Short Jr., Washington State; Amelie O. Rorty, Rutgers; G. William Skinner, Stanford; Sol Tax, Chicago; James L. Gibbs Jr., Stanford; Bernard C. Cohen, Wisconsin; John Flavell, Minnesota; Harold Lewis, Pennsylvania; Dwight Bolinger, Harvard; and Eleanor Maccoby, Stanford.

● **WISCONSIN PRESIDENT RESIGNS:** Fred H. Harrington has announced that he will resign as president of the University of Wisconsin effective 1 October. Harrington said his resignation was long-planned, and that he was resigning because of criticism from the legislature and inadequate support from the board of regents. He has accepted an appointment at Wisconsin as a history professor. Shortly before his announcement, he had been summoned to Washington, along with seven other university presidents, to advise President Nixon on campus unrest.

● **THERMAL POLLUTION:** The Federal Water Quality Administration has announced a strict thermal pollution policy for Lake Michigan forbidding the discharge of any fluid that would raise temperatures at the point of discharge by more than 1° Fahrenheit. The current standard, 3° Fahrenheit, applies to all states, but the new standard would apply only to Lake Michigan. According to an agency spokesman, if the Great Lakes states do not adopt the new standard voluntarily, the agency can impose it after several months of hearings and legal maneuvers. The eventual cost to industrial users of the lake could run to millions.

● **PSYCHIATRISTS ELECTION:** For the first time in its 126-year history, the American Psychiatric Association has elected a black to an association office. Charles Prudhomme of Howard University, Washington, D.C., was elected vice president; he was a leader of the black caucus at last year's APA meeting. Robert S. Garber of Belle Mead, N.J., was elected president; the new president-elect is Ewald Busse of Durham, N.C.

● **SPACE COOPERATION:** The United States has made recent overtures to Moscow aimed at increasing cooperation in space exploration, but the response has been lukewarm. Thomas O. Paine of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration testified at a committee hearing that he has suggested coordination of planetary programs, proposals by Soviets for experiments on our spacecraft, use by Soviets of the laser reflector left on the Moon by Apollo 11 astronauts, Soviet participation in the analysis of moon rocks, and Soviet attendance at the confer-

ence on the Viking Mars mission. Paine also reiterated a readiness to meet to consider cooperative efforts; the Soviet officials replied to this point, agreeing to such a meeting, but deferred discussion of time and place.

● **POLAR RESEARCH:** A report detailing important scientific problems in the north and south polar regions which need to be examined has been prepared by the Committee on Polar Research of the National Research Council. *Polar Research* advocates complete geologic mapping of areas such as the Cordilleran orogen, the Mackenzie River Delta, and Baffin Bay; a study of the circulation and heat budget of the Arctic Ocean; a study of the sea-ice energy balance; and studies concerning meteorology, astronomy, polar geodesy, upper-atmosphere physics, and polar biology and medicine. Copies of the report are available for \$15 from the Printing and Publishing Office, National Academy of Sciences, 2101 Constitution Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C.

● **SOVIET DDT PRODUCTION:** The Soviet Ministry of Agriculture has banned further production of the pesticide DDT "for the protection of food and fodder crops." The order, disclosed in a letter to *Pravda*, apparently does not affect the use of DDT already in stock. The ministry also said it was taking steps to restrict the use of other pesticides, including zinc phosphides, which were recently blamed for the killing of rare wildlife.

● **FOOD ADDITIVES:** The Food and Drug Administration has revoked approval of an unknown number of food additives. The additives had been approved under an old law that was amended in 1958. The additives are not on the "generally regarded as safe" list that was developed in accord with the 1958 amendments, and they have not been approved by specific rulings. Thus, the products "must be examined in the light of current scientific information and current principles," according to the statement printed in the 9 April *Federal Register*. Manufacturers now have 60 days to seek current opinions from the FDA concerning these additives. The FDA has not kept a formal list of the additives but it estimates about 1000 will be affected.

on the adequacy of the eyesight of the man assigned to guard the chicken coop." Jenkins, whose board has been asked by Parker to investigate the matter, noted that two of the men excluded from the committee—namely Bandura and Berkowitz—"have produced research suggesting that children who see violence are more likely to commit it as they model their behavior on the aggressive action they have seen."

Several psychologists interviewed by *Science* cited the great difficulty of es-

tablishing what effect television really has on children, particularly since it is difficult to isolate the effect of television from the numerous other influences that determine a child's attitude toward violence. Rubinstein of NIMH, who heads the small staff which is serving the Surgeon General's committee, said he hopes the data developed by the committee will be persuasive enough so that any reasonable scientist would draw the same conclusion from it. But critics of the committee suggest that the research

results are apt to be somewhat inconclusive and ambiguous. They express concern that the members of the committee will thus have great scope to exercise their alleged biases in interpreting the results. No firm date for completion of the study has been set, but a report of some kind is expected to be produced within a year or two. The controversy has presumably made committee members well aware that their objectivity will be under close scrutiny.

—PHILIP M. BOFFEY and JOHN WALSH

VW Foundation: Money Giver on the European Scene

Hannover, West Germany. The big philanthropic foundations that play an important role in financing education, research, and cultural affairs in the United States have few counterparts in Europe, where government has long been the prime patron of these activities and where great private wealth tends to be unconcerned about doing good works. The most prominent exception—and one that is making itself felt not only in its native West Germany but also throughout the world—is a direct consequence of that fantastic postwar phenomenon, the Volkswagen automobile. It is the Volkswagen Foundation, founded in 1962 as a legal entity that is separate from the Volkswagen Company but is nevertheless a direct beneficiary of its vast financial success. Compared with the giant of them all, the multi-billion-dollar Ford Foundation, which gives away some \$245 million a year, the VW Foundation is relatively small. Last year it spent about \$27 million. But in assets and expenditures it compares not unfavorably with such renowned landmarks of philanthropy as the Rockefeller Foundation (assets, \$373 million; grants and other expenditures, \$46 million), the Carnegie Corporation (assets, \$300 million; grants and other expenditures, \$12 million), and the Sloan Foundation (assets, \$300 million; grants and other expenditures, \$18 million). And since there are very few organizations to compare with it on the European scene, its potential for influence is perhaps all the greater.

The VW Foundation's assets consist of an endowment fund of about \$270 million, plus the annual dividends from about 36 percent of the VW Company's stock. This setup was started in 1959, when the West German government, confronted with the problem of what to do with the booming firm that it had inherited from the Nazi era, decided to make it a joint stock company. Sixty percent of the stock was sold to the public, and the proceeds were set aside as an endowment for the proposed Foundation; most of the remaining stock was equally divided between the federal government and the state of Lower Saxony, where the Foundation's headquarters and VW's corporate headquarters and principal production facilities are located. With its revenue coming from interest on the endowment and dividends from the stock, the Foundation is at the top of Europe's giveaway league, according to the *1969 Directory of European Foundations* (published by the Agnelli Foundation, Via Principe Amedeo 34, Torino, Italy, 550 pp., \$10). Since foundations are possibly the most deliberately inscrutable of arrangements for handling wealth, the standings may be open to question. But, according to the Directory, the little-known Gulbenkian Foundation in Portugal was tops in Europe in total assets for 1967, with \$303 million. For that year, it reported expenditures of only \$15.7 million. These funds were reportedly given for the arts and for educational, scientific, and charitable purposes,

mainly in Portugal and Armenian communities throughout the world. West Germany's newly founded Krupp Foundation was third, with reported assets of \$125 million, but it had not yet made any significant expenditures. Fourth was Great Britain's Nuffield Foundation, with assets for 1965–66 reported at \$82 million and with expenditures of \$5.2 million.

What has the Volkswagen Foundation been doing with its money? It seems that, in line with postwar Germany's quest for tranquillity, it has been proceeding cautiously by backing useful but uncontroversial projects, very much like the pre-Bundy Ford Foundation. (There are no formal ties between the two foundations, but the VW Foundation staff, numbering about 100, inevitably looks with interest on the work of the world leader in philanthropy. When VW moved into new headquarters last year here in Hannover, the Ford Foundation was represented at the dedication ceremony by Mark F. Ethridge, a retired trustee.) One of VW's largest single projects, totaling about \$25 million over 7 years, is for the construction of housing for middle-level academic staff at universities. Another \$10 million is to provide guest houses for foreign visitors at universities. There is a \$20-million program, stretching over several years, to encourage students to enter careers in science teaching. In the well-established foundation pattern of moving into promising scientific and technical fields that may be slow to benefit from the workings of government bureaucracy, the VW Foundation is supporting the establishment of departments of biomedical engineering at the Technische Hochschule at Aachen and at Erlangen University near Nuremberg. And it also provides general support in this field. VW can take credit for the dominant position that West Germany will oc-