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### **Now hear this, you out there!**

We have reported that at least one grant of federal funds and presumably others, both governmental and non-governmental, exist to get in touch with any "intelligent beings" there may be in outer space. People are being hired seriously to scan for and send "messages" to "the others" in outer space. Distinguished scientists have written fantasies on the question.

Two problems worry us in this connection. The money the studies cost is as yet little and perhaps new particles and other strange phenomena may be by-product discoveries. But when we discover the new land, will the natives be friendly? Judging from human experience, the coming of one group upon another is the signal for disastrous combat. Are we prepared for the combat? Is this the newest instance of the political naiveté of astrophysicists and their followers?

A second problem occurs to us. Isn't it in violation of the First Amendment of the Constitution that separates church from state to spend money studying intelligent beings in outer space. Isn't it a tenet of our most numerous religion that there exists such a being and beings, and that they should be worshipped? Certainly their proofs or possibilities of proof are as persuasive at this moment as the theorems set up by the astrophysicists, those theologians with different union cards. Only the pride of the latter will permit them to think that they are not finding God through the Telescope. Either they are proceeding unconstitutionally, or rabbis and pastors should submit their research proposals to ASPA NOW!

Topics + Critiques, v.7 VIII #6

200 words

## The Starving of Libraries

Few people understand the budgets of modern large American Universities. If they did, they would understand them even less, in another sense. For instance, the University of Wisconsin will spend over \$72 millions in 1961-2, of which \$40 millions are called the general budget. Now of this general budget, only \$1.4 millions goes for libraries. Not books alone, but whole libraries, and we wonder: how little must go for real intellectual materials in the typical university? The idea that a university or college consists essentially of some books, some teachers to cooperate with the books, and not too many students to occupy the time of books and faculty—an idea that we confess to holding—is as true to life as saying the USA is a Negro country. Some 1,875 students will be added to the prior year's total. The libraries' budget has gone up \$153,000; that's something under a hundred dollars per new student. But the 30,000 other students then "receive" \$47 apiece out of the \$1.25 millions left. A small fraction, of course, represents books and visual materials; some represents useful services. But it's doubtful that the average student gets much out of the libraries save a place to sit and an occasional answer to an inquiry. We have here a vicious circle, in which the ignorant student does not make demands, which could not be filled anyway by an underpaid and under-equipped establishment, which can scarcely maintain its past estate much less join the information-revolution, which is largely ignored by near-sighted legislators and flashy administrators, whose children don't acquire an interest in books anyhow.

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#### SCIENTISTS DEPLORE THEIR PUBLIC FUTILITY

Recently the leaders of two associations of American natural scientists coincidentally issued statements deplored their impotence in public policy. On July 7 the Committee on Science and Promotion of Human Welfare of the American Association for the Advancement of Science urged members to stimulate discussion and commentary among themselves and with the public on "the social consequences of technological progress," relations between research and military activities, international aspects of science, government support of research, the social responsibility of scientists, and their integrity.

A special editorial by M. Stanley Livingston in the June 27 *Federation of American Scientists Newsletter* declares: "Unfortunately the FAS has consistently failed to make a significant impact on the public at large, and seemingly does not have the organizational experience, or ability to mount such a campaign." We might recommend to both groups a joint action program with political and other social scientists, though we appreciate that even political scientists lament their lack of influence. The natural scientists might well request the loan of a group of behavioral scientists to help them clarify and promote their ideals. After all, the social scientists would call them in if they had to construct automated mazes or predict the weather.

No books other than dictionaries.  
Nothing must distract or charm.  
Nothing must rescue you from boredom except your work.

Never indulge in politics and almost never read the newspapers, but never lose an opportunity to talk politics with anyone whatsoever. This will not teach you anything about the *res publica*, but it will inform you admirably as to the character of the people you talk with.

Imagination (in my case) rarely precedes the idea; it is the latter, and never the former, that excites me. But the latter without the former produces nothing but a useless exaltation. The idea of a work is its composition. Because of imagining too rapidly so many writers of today create ephemeral, poorly composed works. With me the idea of a work precedes often by several years its imagination.

As soon as the idea of a work takes on consistency--that is, as soon as the work organizes itself--the elaboration consists in little more than suppressing everything that is useless to its organism.

I am aware that everything that constitutes the originality of the writer is added unto this; but woe to him who thinks of his personality while writing. It always comes through sufficiently if it is sincere, and Christ's saying is just as true in art: "Whosoever will save his life (his personality) shall lose it."

This preliminary work, then, I perform while walking. Then it is that the outside world has the greatest hold over me and that distraction is most dangerous. For since work must always be natural, you must develop your idea without tension or violence. And sometimes it does not come at once. You have to wait. This requires infinite patience. It's no good to seize hold of the idea against its will; it then seems so surly that you wonder what attracted you in it. The preferred idea comes only when there is no other idea in its place. Hence you can evoke it only by thinking of nothing else. At times I have spent more than an hour waiting for it. If you have the misfortune, feeling nothing coming, to think: "I am wasting my time," it's all over and you have wasted your time.

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## 16. EDITORIAL: Criticism of Foundations

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Much is said but little is written about the relation of foundations to social research. A favorite topic of the convention lobbies seems never to find its way into print. Some say a taboo, with sanctions, is at work. We prefer to believe in ordinary oversight. In either event, more needs to be recorded about foundation research programs, both on the credit and on the debit side.

The 7300 foundations of America include less than fifty that are in a legal or realistic sense "free" to give more than a pittance to social research. These few foundations gave to such research, in 1953, about \$11,000,000, an insignificant amount when compared with the expenditures of governments and universities on social research. How-

ever, the free foundations, with their money, are critical influences in universities of the first rank and among scholars who are actually or potentially the intellectual leaders of their professions. Following upon this primary impact come secondary repercussions throughout American society.

The human element of this oligarchy of research amounts to about one hundred executives. The number may reach several hundreds if those active board members who have power over policies and those appointive outside committees who have sporadic grant-making powers are included. In either case, an aggregate that has much to do with shaping American social science is small.

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dislike us viscerally? Why are we set up in the middle of New York City? Are we sending out honest, even if disagreeable, letters of rejection? Have we backed anyone but favorites in the scholarly race? If so, how did he turn out? Do we have a policy, and, if not, must we pretend to have one? How many petty projects are we forcing upon men who should be doing more important studies? Could one

man do the entire work of this foundation, with much the same results?

No doubt many foundation leaders ask this kind of question of themselves. However, the small, attentive, and anxious foundation public needs to be part of the discussion. The work of free foundations is too important to be controlled; but it is also too important to pass without informed public comment.

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## 17. EDITORIAL: Congress and the Support of Behavioral Science

Fifteen social and medical scientists ask for "National Support for Behavioral Science" in a manifesto of February 8, sum-

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nate on in that regard. Rather, let two structural recommendations or implications be considered. First, without even a deep breath, our distinguished colleagues leaped aboard the ship of state. Apparently no one is responsible these days for inquiring whether an activity should be added to the great many already engaged in by government. They did not ask questions of means. They seemed prematurely committed to national support of the behavioral sciences, although numerous and grave objections can be raised against governmental support of science, particularly social science.

In the second place, it probably did not occur to our colleagues, no one of whom is a political scientist, that the specific mode of governing the proposed new research was in itself a most important problem. The implications are that science, if it is going to be state-supported, can only be organized within the executive branch of government. Though this may be true with respect to many kinds of science, it is less true the broader, more abstract, and more searching the scientific work, whether in the natural or the behavioral sciences.

It is the editor's opinion that the behavioral sciences, except for bread-and-butter research, should not be joined to the executive branch of the government, but ought to be an appendage of Congress. There is ultimately less political danger in such an arrangement. There is great control of expenditures and program. There is greater expression of the needs of the local academic institutions of this large country. There is room for more deviant hypotheses and research personnel. There is greater sympathy for

marized in this issue of PROD. Let us ignore the kinds of research recommended for support, although there is much to rumi-

certain needed types of political and administrative research. What is more, there would be less suspicion vented upon the research programs if the Congress were their creator. The Library of Congress and the Legislative Reference Service are two existing research instrumentalities of Congress. A National Institute of Social Science might be fitted readily into an autonomous relation with these and Congress.

An Institute related to Congress might provide greater freedom from the dangers of statism as science becomes bureaucratized. Also social science might be less narrowly pursued if it were associated with the highest general legislative bodies of the government. Although Congress may often seem to us to be disappointingly cold toward factual investigation and systematic analysis of human problems, we should not forego any and all attempts to change this condition. In the long perspective of American government, it is better to have one Congressman request and vote support for a study of social problems than to have ten minor executives of the administration support such study. Although social scientists might feel more assured and secure tucked away in the nooks and crannies of the National Science Foundation, they would develop stronger wills, keener senses of the important hypotheses, and more vivid imaginations if they worked a little nearer to the legislative halls. If national support of social research is defended ultimately because the "national interest" is served by such research, then Congress rather than an administrative agency should be best disposed to define the interest and govern the research.

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### ***On popularizing science***

We are in favor of bringing science into the mass media via judicious translation of jargon, but sometimes our colleagues carry things too far. Recently, New York City papers carried an account of a "mad sniper." The headline, "Police Nab Sniper in Wild Gun Fight Atop West Side Hotel," tells the main story. The chap involved had also engaged the police in a gun fight 15 months before, after sniping in the streets, and had been in and out of a mental hospital repeatedly over a period of years. This perplexing, not to say dangerous, case can be explained, however, and psychiatry had its day. Dr. Alfred Stanley, Rockland State Hospital's Director, said that the sniper was an alcoholic but "showed no evidence of psychosis." The report goes on: "He probably has some personality thing." Dr. Stanley said. "Alcohol doesn't agree with him."

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### **Scientists' Institute of Public Information**

Everyone, it seems, is tackling tough problems these days. In New York 100 scientists (natural, naturally) formed a Scientists' Institute of Public Information to see that information on radiation and, hopefully, many other subjects, is "presented unen-

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cumbered by political or moral judgments, which judgments are the prerogatives and responsibility of all citizens, . . . prepared with scientific objectivity, which includes attention to divergent studies and interpretations, . . . and is freely available to all." (Cf. *Science*, 22 Feb., 741-2). This appears suspiciously like an invitation to dismantle the Defense Department, revive the mythical Periclean public, and exchange a scientist's gown for an angel's robe. Yet we wish them well.

Topics + Queries, vol VI # 8

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### Congress and Research Controls

*Science* magazine, organ of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, has been having trouble lately with its philosophy of government. On January 25, it expressed the view that Congress was moving in an undesirable way towards closer scrutiny and control of research expenditures. In the same issue it appeared to support the government's position in cracking down on the American Institute of Biological Sciences (cf. ABS, March 1963). On February 15, Representative Fountain pointed out this "contradiction," saying, "These [AIBS] irregularities appear to have resulted from the kind of 'liberal' policies advocated in your editorial." (p. 578) It appears to us also that *Science* should try to specify what it regards as the proper kind of governmental regulation. Some readers might suspect that it may be trying to get the best of both worlds—free science and free public coffers—without appreciating the difficulties attendant thereto.

Topics + Critiques, vol VI #8

## TOPICS AND CRITIQUES

### Ruling on the Rules of Research

The Federal Trade Commission announced in January that A. C. Nielsen Co., Pulse, Inc., and C-E-I-R, Inc. had agreed not to "misrepresent the accuracy of their radio and television audience measurements" and not to use survey techniques that cause "bias or error". The FTC had previously charged the companies with claiming accurate measurements when in fact they should have claimed only estimates.

Also, a House of Representatives Commerce subcommittee has undertaken to investigate the various program rating services, expecting to show, among other things, that some of the methods used are faulty and that many purchasers employ services without understanding their true nature.

These governmental activities have intriguing possibilities. Most scientific writing is by nature looser than the "reality" it depicts. Who are to edit it—politicians? bureaucrats? Much scientific writing is by nature exaggerated, as in theoretical writing, heuristic writing, model-building, game theory. Will theory be crushed by state fiat? If all the non-provable assertions and advices of management consultants, clinical psychologists, political scientists, and industrial relations experts were compiled, they would exceed the Congressional Record during a filibuster. Will the FTC ask for similar guarantees of careful scientific wording from all in industry? Will Congress make the same demand of itself?

The explanations of audience-measuring—sorry, audience-estimating—companies are, when compared with the average messages communicated not only to laymen but among experts, an innocent as spring lambs. Meanwhile the wolves prowl freely and in

great numbers. It is a queer world indeed. Where, pray, are the professional associations who are supposed to set standards? Where, too, are the defenders of civil liberties? If they will not suffer Henry Miller to be repressed as obscene, how can they bear research organizations being told how to describe their work? To be fair, the FTC should tell Henry Miller to say "—", which is more precise than "—". But not nearly so moving.

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