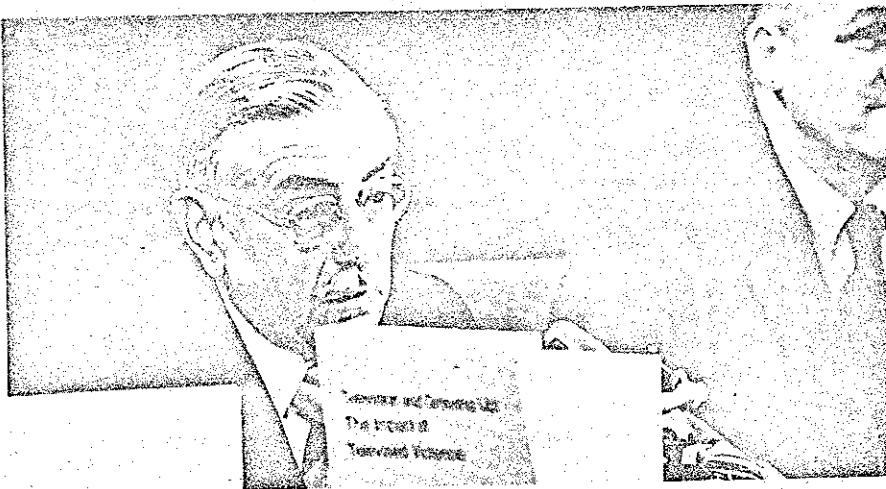


## Downhold on television violence

### Out of Pastore hearings comes agreement that something will be done—but what?



Chairman Pastore

Television violence has been shown to cause aggressiveness in some children who are predisposed to such behavior. No one is sure exactly what "violence" is, specifically how it affects children, how many children are affected or how much violence on TV is excessive. But the tentative causal link established by the surgeon general's report is enough for broadcasters to begin reducing violence in children's programming—immediately and substantially.

That was the tenor of a four-day hearing held last week on the report by Senator John O. Pastore's (D-R.I.) Communications Subcommittee.

The \$1-million report, "Television and Growing Up: The Impact of Televised Violence," was requested by Senator Pastore and was compiled under the direction of a 12-member Scientific Advisory Committee on Television and Social Behavior appointed by the surgeon general in 1969. It was released last January (BROADCASTING, Jan. 24).

Surgeon General Jesse L. Steinfeld told the subcommittee that "my professional response . . . is that the broadcasters should be put on notice. The overwhelming consensus and the unanimous Scientific Advisory Committee's report indicate that televised violence, indeed, does have an adverse effect on certain members of our society." That

causal relationship, he said, "is sufficient to warrant appropriate and immediate remedial action." TV should not be the "whipping boy" for all of society's ills, he said, but "we must take whatever actions we can, when we do identify factors contributing to anti-social behavior in our society."

Dr. Steinfeld said that "unfortunately" two of the networks (ABC and NBC) and the National Association of Broadcasters were allowed to veto seven of the prospective members of the advisory committee. (CBS declined participation in the selection process.) But he stressed that the end product was a unanimous report from scientists from a variety of backgrounds.

Dr. Steinfeld appeared at the opening of the hearings last Tuesday (March 21). On the third day broadcasters got a chance to be heard. Julian Goodman, president of NBC; John Schneider, president of the CBS/Broadcast Group; Elton Rule, president of ABC, and Vincent T. Wasilewski, president of the NAB, all called attention to efforts already being made to reduce violence and elevate quality in children's programming. All pledged to cooperate in joint discussions of ways to deal further with the problem.

Senator Pastore made it clear throughout the hearing that total elimination

of violence was not the goal. "We're talking about violence for violence's sake," he said. "Violence for profit."

Dr. Steinfeld, when asked by Senator Pastore what course of action he would recommend, made the following suggestions:

- A foundation to monitor violence and publish violence ratings. He said the John and Mary R. Markle Foundation has indicated interest in spearheading such an effort.

- A study of the long-range social implications of violence and the use of TV for prosocial behavior.

- FCC scrutiny of stations in terms of the violence content of their programs.

- Parental action to "unsanitize" violence on TV by pointing out to children the consequences of violent acts and emphasizing prosocial behavior. In this context, he said the Office of Child Development of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare will publish a book in the next few months on how parents should view TV with their children.

Dr. Steinfeld was accompanied by Dr. Eli Rubinstein, vice chairman of the advisory committee, and seven members of the committee. When pressed by Senator Pastore, they all concurred with the surgeon general's conclusions.

One of the advisory committee members, Dr. Alberta E. Siegel, outlined a plan of action that contained a few additional suggestions. These were boycotting products advertised in programs containing excessive violence, increasing support for public television, appointment of a child advocate to the FCC and institution of travel fellowships for writers and producers to observe how other nations handle children's programming.

Representative John Murphy (D-N.Y.) repeated his misgivings over the report in light of the fact that the TV industry was allowed to blackball seven proposed members of the advisory committee. "The result of all this has been an alleged misrepresentation of some otherwise excellent research that has caused a rebellion, not only among the



Dr. Steinfeld



Chairman Burch



Mr. Johnson



Congressman Murphy

scientists who were originally blackballed from the advisory committee, but among many of the scientists who actually participated in and contributed to" the report, he said.

Mr. Murphy recommended the surgeon general "establish a review panel of social scientists who have no connection with or vested interest in the TV industry, to re-evaluate the conclusions."

Dr. Merlin K. Duval, HEW assistant secretary for health and scientific affairs, attended the first day of the hearing but did not testify. But in a statement submitted for the record, he said. "It is beyond dispute that a reduction in the violent content of television programming is most desirable. At the direction of HEW Secretary Elliot Richardson, he said, "we are currently engaged in an intensive analysis of the report and its supporting data in order that we may determine what additional follow-up studies must now be undertaken."

FCC Chairman Dean Burch told the subcommittee that it is no longer a question of whether something should be done about TV violence—only a question of what and by whom.

He noted that the commission has met with Dr. Steinfeld on the problem and that the FCC's children's unit is using the National Institute of Mental Health for guidance in the area of violence. There have also been informal meetings with the networks "partly to pick their brains and partly . . . to keep their feet to the fire," he said.

The next step, he said, will be public panel discussions and oral argument before the commission around the middle of May.

"We very definitely believe that the response of the broadcasting industry to the surgeon general's report should be immediate and decisive—and that it should proceed along two parallel but distinct tracks," he said. He identified these as a sharp reduction in "all gratuitous and needless violence" in programs children watch and "the creation of substantial amounts of new diversified programming, not just the usual diet of cartoons, to open the eyes and expand the minds of young viewers."

Chairman Burch added that joint con-

sultation, among the networks and broadcasters generally, is essential. He also suggested ways for the NAB Code Authority to help—public participation, a larger staff and one with expertise in child development, the pre-screening of children's programs in conjunction with a rating system. And he urged full cooperation from all networks and support from advertisers.

Senator Howard Baker (R-Tenn.) asked Chairman Burch how "gratuitous and needless" violence could be tested. Chairman Burch said he has thought about it but just doesn't know. Another problem, Mr. Burch said, is implementing a rating system without increasing the audiences of programs containing violence.

Chairman Burch was accompanied by Commissioners Nicholas Johnson, H. Rex Lee and Richard Wiley.

In his testimony, Commissioner Johnson compared the TV networks to child molesters, and stated categorically that "the men who are currently running network television in this country are a vicious, evil influence."

Commissioner Johnson's suggestions were labeled "irrelevant" by Chairman Burch, and "sterile rhetoric" by Commissioner Wiley.

To equate programming with child molestation, said Senator Baker, "is violence of the most despicable kind and unbecoming a federal official . . . You have dragged a red herring across the trail to hide what ought to be done."

Drs. Robert Liebert and Leonard Berkowitz, who provided research for the report, maintained that TV violence has a much more significant impact on children than the report indicates.

That was also the opinion of other researchers—Drs. Monroe Lefkowitz, Leonard Eron, Leopold Walder and L. Rowell Huesmann. They noted the report "systematically includes and excludes certain kinds of data. It ignores other data completely and dilutes and overqualifies certain research results. Moreover, the report contains inaccuracies." They suggested that the data be re-evaluated "by a group whose credentials are unimpeachable," the National Academy of Science.

They also recommended self-policing by the TV industry, parental education and guidance on children's viewing, TV

announcements on the harmful effects of violence, violence ratings, increased attention to the problem by the FCC and an annual report on violence.

Mr. Goodman pointed out that the surgeon general's report does not detail the extent of the causal relationship between TV violence and aggressive behavior in children. He said, however, that NBC felt a responsibility to learn more about the subject and avoid programs that could adversely affect children. "This we have tried to do," he said, through structuring children's programming to eliminate violence that could cause harm, and through introducing Saturday-morning programs to entertain and educate.

In 1969, Mr. Goodman noted, NBC committed itself to a five-year study of violence, the preliminary indications of which "are consistent with the general trend of the data in the surgeon general's report."

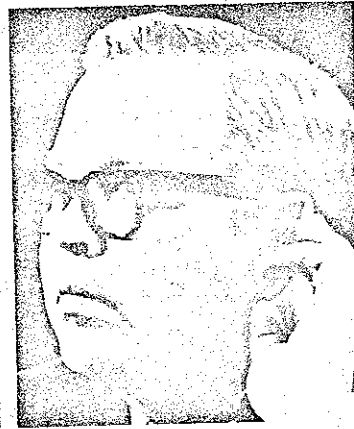
He said "the real question for us is not to condemn all action and conflict because it can be called violent, but to present these elements . . . in a way that does not glorify violence, does not treat it as an acceptable solution to human problems, does not present it in a brutal or disturbing fashion, and does not use it for shock effect."

Senator Pastore said he was looking "for something more positive" but he was pleased when Mr. Goodman said he would welcome a consensus on how specifically to deal with TV violence.

Noting that the report's findings are tentative and offer no guidelines for portrayal of violence on television, Mr. Schneider said "informed guidance in this area would be invaluable." Perhaps "violent portrayals should more explicitly show the direct and indirect effects of a violent act," he offered.

Defining prosocial content is difficult, he said, but if it means using TV to depict positive human values and non-aggressive solutions to problems, "these values are currently reflected in many television programs today."

In the area of research, he noted that CBS has committed \$1.5 million since 1962 to studies of broadcasting and society, \$1 million of which has been devoted to violence research. He mentioned two current projects—by Dr. Stanley Milgram of the City University



Mr. Schneider

Mr. Rule

Mr. Goodman

Mr. Wasilewski

of New York and Dr. William Belson of the London School of Economics—that will cost CBS \$700,000.

He said First Amendment considerations make it inappropriate for government to enter the programming process. But "we pledge that as a result of the findings of the advisory-committee report the concerns of that report will play—and have already played—a significant decisional role in the number, scheduling, and creative treatment of action-adventure material on CBS."

Mr. Rule said it was "unfortunate" that the report was not able to identify the children affected by TV violence, the size of the group affected and the stimuli that tend to increase aggression in children. "Nevertheless," he said, "now that we are reasonably certain that televised violence can increase aggressive behavior in some children, we will have to manage our program planning accordingly." In outlining ABC's plan to help solve the problem, he said that by this fall the network will have entirely eliminated from weekend programming cartoons relying solely on action and devoid of comedy. Emphasis is now on programs that resolve conflicts "through wit, charm, intelligence and imagination," he said.

He added that ABC is carefully evaluating its prime-time schedule in terms of adverse effects programs may have on children, has spent substantial amounts over the past two years on TV-violence research, now scheduled for completion June 1, and will intensify its research efforts to a commitment of \$1 million over the next four years.

"The network's sincere efforts to achieve more sound, more stimulating television for children will be apparent in our schedule next season," he promised.

The network spokesmen agreed that a violence-rating system for programs should at least be explored.

In his prepared testimony, Mr. Wasilewski said he had asked the NAB Code Authority to undertake, "as a high priority matter," a detailed study of the surgeon general's report. He said the Code Authority had been instructed "for the purposes of developing recommendations to the industry as to how

the results of this report may be implemented."

Pledging industry support to determine how negative effects of TV violence on children can be alleviated, Mr. Wasilewski disclosed that a study by Professor William Wells of the University of Chicago "also suggests that some children may, in some circumstances, be adversely affected by viewing TV programs containing violence."

The Wells study, of about 300 junior-high-school children over an eight-week period, was funded with \$140,000 by the Joint Committee for Research on TV and Children, sponsored by the television networks and the NAB.

Mr. Wasilewski said the Code Authority's three offices (New York, Washington and Los Angeles) have monitored a total of 2,278 network programs. These reports, he commented, cover such matters as treatment of crime and its techniques, violence and its consequences, retribution, race, morality, safety, prejudice and the like.

Mr. Wasilewski also disclosed that from 1968 to 1970, the three TV networks and the Code Authority jointly funded a consultancy with two members of a Temple University unit in law and psychiatry. They were Drs. Melvin S. Heller, a physician, and Samuel Polsky, a psychiatrist. They studied the monitoring findings and made suggestions, Mr. Wasilewski said, that not only further codified and strengthened network editing criteria, but also pinpointed factors to be considered in the treatment of violence in programs directed to adults as well as to children. He did not amplify.

### TV's 'violence index' drops for 1970

Television violence declined in 1970 compared with 1969, but movies-on-TV violence rose sharply and comic violence is increasing. These are among the findings of Dr. George Gerbner of the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School of Communications.

Dr. Gerbner's report, issued last week, is an update of a study he did for the surgeon general's investigation of TV violence and children (see page

25) but this covered only 1967 to 1969.

Dr. Gerbner noted that children's cartoons are "still by far" the most violent of TV programs, although his charts show that their "violence index" dropped between 1969 and 1970.

Among other trends, Dr. Gerbner noted that NBC is "clearly emerging" as the most violent of the three networks—with a violence index of 203.3 in 1970. ABC and CBS were almost equal in that year, with violence indexes respectively of 161.1 and 161.4.

In establishing his ratings, Dr. Gerbner used equations to indicate prevalence, rate and roles of violence in programming. The indexes are based on one week's monitoring of each year's prime-time and Saturday morning programming on the three national networks.

For example, Dr. Gerbner found that whereas the violence index for all networks and all programs was 183.3 in 1969, it fell to 172.8 in 1970; cartoons fell from a 262.0 index to 249.9, but feature films zoomed from 168.6 to 249.6, comedy from 183.4 to 195.9.

### Sexy movies get into act

Senator Howard H. Baker Jr. (R-Tenn.) kept asking about X-rated movies during the TV-violence hearing last week.

NBC President Julian Goodman said he could not think of any circumstance under which his network would schedule an X-rated film. Elton Rule, president of ABC, replied that it has R-rated movies but edits them and sends them back for another rating by the motion-picture industry before the films are shown. CBS/Broadcast Group President John Schneider said the network cleans up offensive material in such films and shows them if, after editing, it is possible to do so.

Senator Baker had received a letter from Dr. Charles A. Trentham of the Southern Baptist Convention in Knoxville, Tenn., complaining about televised X-rated films and mentioning CBS's showing of "The Damned" last month (BROADCASTING, March 6). After much discussion Mr. Schneider said he wished the picture had never been shown.

mark of Goldmark Communications Corp. (affiliate of Warner Communications Corp.), at NCTA panel.

"The linkage of a domestic satellite with cable systems across the country to carry new types of programing to all homes will launch cable TV as a truly viable new national network offering complete and essential services beyond those now available," he said.

And, he added, while this is on horizon, higher color standards (between 800 and 1,000 lines, compared to U.S.'s 525 lines) should be established to provide quality definition. Announced today (May 22) was appointment of K. Blair Benson, CBS vice president for engineering development, as director of audio and video engineering at Goldmark Communications to work on this development.

### Networks set schedules to cover Nixon in Moscow

Plans for coverage of President Nixon's visit to Soviet Union were announced by TV networks Friday (May 19), with schedules calling for reports starting today (May 22) and continuing through June 1 (early story page 53).

All three networks have scheduled specials today starting at 9 a.m. NYT and running about one hour, centering on Mr. Nixon's arrival in Moscow. In addition, ABC expects to carry live, satellite reports tomorrow (May 23), Saturday (May 27) and May 29, 30, 31, and June 1.

CBS-TV also plans to carry live, satellite reports today, tomorrow and May 29, according to tentative plans. Daily highlights of President Nixon's trip will be carried on various CBS-TV newscasts.

NBC-TV's special coverage after today is to include reports tomorrow and Saturday and May 29 and May 31.

Network reports will be from half-hour to one hour in length and spokesmen stressed there may be additional coverage. Radio networks also planned to carry developments on regular newscasts and on special broadcasts.

Bob Considine, correspondent for King Features Syndicate and Mutual, will also provide special reports on President's trip for Teleprompter Manhattan Cable TV Cable system will also carry on Wednesday (May 24) and Friday (May 26) film titled "Russia," said to be first uncensored film about life in Soviet Union

**Remote.** President Nixon will appear on Soviet television system in address to Russian people on Sunday, May 28, it was learned last Friday. Broadcast will be made available for pickup by American networks and stations. No other details were available in first reports late last week.

and reported by Teleprompter to have been studied closely by White House in preparing for trip.

### Violence index due by June 30 from HEW

Government experts expect to reach judgment by June 30 on feasibility of developing methods for monitoring violence on television.

Elliot L. Richardson, secretary of Health, Education & Welfare, offered that estimate in letter to Senator John O. Pastore (D-R.I.), chairman of Senate Communications Subcommittee, who has asked that violence index be developed.

Mr. Richardson said that staff of National Institute of Health is discussing with experts issues involved in developing index, and that on June 2 it will hold "intensive workshop" to address issues and "to lay out directions for further NIMH efforts in this area." Workshop will follow two days of conferences with outside consultants and FCC staffers. FCC along with HEW and surgeon general has been charged by Senator Pastore with developing violence index.

He also reported that NIMH has already awarded two-year research grant of \$100,000 to Dr. George Gerbner of Annenberg School of Communications, University of Pennsylvania, to develop indicators of trends in prime-time television dramatic content and of their efforts. He said Dr. Gerbner has been asked to focus on development of methodology that will permit meaningful assessment of level of TV violence and context in which it appears and its meaning to viewer.

### Two of networks' O&O's sign with N.Y. coalition

WNBC-TV and WABC-TV New York have signed formal agreement with coalition of black community organizations to hire more blacks on all levels of station operation and to program more black-oriented news and entertainment shows.

Coalition, called Black Citizens for Media (BCFM), earlier had petitioned FCC to deny license of WCBS-TV New York, which did not sign agreement because, in words of Robert L. Hosking, vice president and general manager of station, "to accede to all the demands of one organization would severely hamper the operations of the station, place WCBS-TV in a discriminatory position with regard to the entire audience and other minority groups, and give the BCFM a voice in some aspects of station management (BROADCASTING, May 8)."

Agreement is not viewed this way by Lawrence E. Gershman, station manager of WNBC-TV, who said, "what this



1972

# Straw Editor's Report

May 29, 1972 - 147

IN ADVANCE...

...Further House Investigations Subcommittee hearings on staged news events unlikely since Chmn. Harley Stagers (D-W Va) -- disappointed by low key coverage -- can't come up with more revealing second act. Stagers, in a self-fulfilling prophecy, claiming his call for hearings re-alerted newscasters to avoid flagrant abuse of dramatics.

\* ...Feasibility study for TV "violence index" due June 30 from Univ. of Penna. Professor George Gerbner, charged Nat'l Inst. of Mental Health to develop "indicators or trends in prime-time TV dramatic content and of their effects," under a \$100,000 government grant.

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"NEWSGIRLS" BECAME LEGALLY PROTECTED BY STATE LAW FOR THE FIRST TIME when New York's Governor Rockefeller signed a bill last week providing that girls may work as newspaper carriers up to 4 hours on school days and not more than 5 hours when there's no school. (In another bill, the Governor established that minors could work only between the hours of 7 A.M. and 7 P.M.). Previously, young women have asserted their right to equal opportunity in paper-delivering employment by going to court (against the *Allentown (Pa) Call Chronicle* in 1971) or applying to a state civil rights office (as with the *Salem (Ore) Capital Journal* in 1970).

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FASTER THAN YOU CAN SAY "PETITION TO DENY," New York area telecasters are agreeing to minority demands for beefed up programming and employment opportunities, less than a month after all the stations in the area filed for their license renewal applications.

The New Jersey-oriented Coalition for Fair Broadcasting will soon announce formal agreements that will bring to the stationless state a fat new share of programming designed to focus on New Jersey. *WNBC-TV* will expand its "New York Illustrated," the award-winning local documentary series, to include regular "New Jersey Illustrated" programs. *WOR-TV* will move its "New Jersey Report" to a more favorable time slot. *WABC-TV* will devote the first "Eyewitness News Conference" of each month to Garden State events. "The 51st State," public *WNET-TV*'s newscast emphasizing NYC, will detour 25% of its news staff from "the crossroads of the world" to a bureau which will be opened on the other side of the Hudson. In addition, *WNBC*, *WOR* and *WABC* will each

commit at least one full-time correspondent to cover New Jersey affairs.

Part of the Coalition's swift success may be attributable to the potent support of such blue-ribbon individuals and organizations as Newark Mayor Kenneth Gibson, Sen. Harrison Williams, and local chapters of the AFL-CIO, Council of Churches and League of Women Voters.

Still holding out against the Jersey tide as of last week were *WCBS-TV* and *WNEW-TV*.

Black community groups -- organized under the banner of the the Black Citizens for Fair Media -- reached agreements with *WABC* and *WNBC* to provide advice and direction in management, programming, production and hiring. Black advisory committees will meet quarterly to consult about training and staffing efforts and the provision of regularly scheduled public affairs programs "produced, written and, where possible, directed by Blacks," as well as "prime time special programming over the next 3 years." Moreover, *WNBC* may hire a Black theatre reviewer. Each station will employ a Black community affairs director as liaison between the advisory committee, the community and top station brass.

*WCBS*, sticking to its statement made when the challengers filed in Washington, said: "To accede to all the demands of one organization would severely hamper the operation of the station, place *WCBS* in a discriminatory position with regard to the entire audience and other minority groups, and give the B.C.F.M. a voice in some aspects of station management." While welcoming viewer suggestions, they'd rather fight than switch.

Both community-station agreements were hammered out with the assistance of Atty. Robert Stein at the Citizens Communication Center in Washington. For a copy of the 15-page B.C.F.M. agreement, send us \$2.

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HOW FAST DOES NEWS TRAVEL? Following the shooting of George Wallace, a New York market research firm quizzed 312 residents on when and how they learned of the assassination attempt. By 6 o'clock in the evening -- less than 2 hours after the shooting -- 61% of Gotham knew about the event (45% first from radio, 44% from word of mouth, 11% from TV). After 6 P.M., the primary source among those polled shifted to television (49% first from TV, 27% from another person, 24% from radio). The awareness figure for the city jumped from 61% to 81% by 7 P.M.; 89% by 9 P.M.; and by 10 o'clock some 98% of the city was aware of the shooting.

Every second telephone respondent was asked about his/her general information habits: most stated they would not only listen to the news on radio and television (81%) but they would also read about it in the next day's newspaper

(73%). The telephone survey by Consumer Response Corp. was completed for *Media Industry Newsletter*.

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RESPECT FOR THE FATHER-OF-THE-YEAR was all Agnew could have asked. The Vice-President's acceptance speech as he received the father-of-the-year award last week lauded the virtues of stern parental discipline. Yet nowhere in the substantial media coverage of the event was there any allusion to the Agnew daughter who had a run-in with Washington school authorities over the use of marijuana.

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MUM'S NOT THE WORD WHEN IT COMES TO TELLING PHONE-IN CALLERS that their conversation is being recorded on tape for possible broadcast. Stations which ask questions of a "harassing, embarrassing, or perplexing nature designed to elicit reactions usually expected from 'practical jokes,'" should consider themselves warned that that kind of entertainment is a no-no at the Commission. "The results are sometimes shocking and harmful to a degree not expected," said the FCC citing violations by *WKBW* (AM, Buffalo, NY), *WLOT* (AM, Marinette, Wis) and *KOY* (AM, Phoenix, Ariz) for leading unsuspecting callers down a primrose path without first making clear that the conversation was destined for broadcast.

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THE FIRST, INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON ECOLOGY to produce action-taking resolutions as well as furthering information will be held June 5-16 in Stockholm, Sweden. Plans to service news organizations via U.N. headquarters in New York seem minimal, but reporters planning to attend or those looking for domestic sidebar stories may want an annotated bibliography of current U.S. and world opinion on the range of topics to be discussed. For a copy of "International Environment Policy," send 25¢ to the Univ. of Wisconsin at Green Bay, Library, Green Bay, Wisconsin 54305.

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CITY FOR SALE -- not real estate, but the slick bi-monthly "magazine of urban life and environment" published by the National Urban Coalition. While the magazine's revenues have risen to the quarter million mark on circulation of 50 thousand (about half of it paid), the costs of publishing the book hover around half a million dollars, and the projections for 1973 foretell something like \$80,000 in red ink. But the Urban Coalition isn't prepared to put in any more money, so the search for a new home is getting underway.

As a prestigious and serious publication dealing with the priority problems of urban America, *City* has had its share

of name authors (sociologist Philip Hauser, *Washington Post's* David Broder, Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm) plus name advertisers (Atlantic Richfield, McGraw Hill, Shell Oil); and prospective angels will also be impressed with the reader loyalty evidenced by a renewal rate around 70%.

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RELIGION MAY BE GOING COMMERCIAL, but not if the Mormons can help it. A discussion of "Jesus Christ Superstar," even on the lofty planes of scholarship and theology, was refused air time by Mormon Church-owned *KSL-TV* (Utah). Elder Ezra Taft Benson -- former Sec. of Agriculture, now Mormon Apostle and *KSL* board member -- condemned the stage play when it began its run in Salt Lake City and forbade Mormons to see it.

When *KSL* refused to air the Superstar discussion, which was part of a regularly scheduled public service program produced by the Utah Council of Churches, the Council discontinued its services on the *CBS* affiliate. After 4 months of negotiations between the station and non-Mormon clergymen, the Council's threat of legal action in the event the talks failed became moot as *KSL* agreed to present the discussion of "Jesus Christ Superstar." The Council of Churches then resumed its public service series.

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POSTSCRIPT TO THE HUGHES-IRVING AFFAIR. Of the numerous coincidences surrounding the alleged autobiography of Howard Hughes, "the richest irony of all" -- involving 2 reporters tailing Clifford Irving late into the night -- is explained in the book *Hoax* by a team of *London Sunday Times* reporters (Messrs. Fay, Chester and Linklater). As they tell it, Clifford Irving confessed to the N.Y. District Attorney because *Los Angeles Times* man John Goldman and *Time-Life News Service's* Frank McCulloch together told Irving they "knew all about (John) Meier," a former Hughes employee whom they independently guessed was Irving's source to the autobiography. Ironically, Irving thought they were referring to Stanley Meyer, the Hollywood reporter who really leaked the key material Irving used -- through ex-Hughes employee Noah Dietrich and Hughes chronicler Jim Phalen. So, "the con man had himself been conned."

Sincerely,

R. Peter Straus

P.S. To give you a respite after the short Memorial Day week, the next issue, SER 148, will be published June 12. Issue No. 146, dated May 15, should have read May 22, 1972.

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# HEW's 'TViolence Index' Survey; Seattle Panel Reports On Problem

Washington, May 23.

A Government study is underway to consider the feasibility of developing a "violence index" for rating television, as suggested by Sen. John O. Pastore (D-R.I.) in the aftermath of the seminal Surgeon General's report linking tviolence to antisocial behavior in children.

Elliot L. Richardson, Secretary of Health, Education & Welfare, wrote to Pastore saying that by June 30, HEW should be able to decide on the feasibility of such an index. The National Institute of Mental Health will hold a discussion June 2 to assess the "state of the art," Richardson said, and will go over the field with an FCC representative, researchers, and others with expertise in the field.

NIMH has already awarded a two-year, \$100,000 research grant to Dr. George Gerbner of the Annenberg School of Communication "to develop indicators of trends in primetime television dramatic content and of their effects," Richardson wrote Pastore. "In particular, NIMH staff and the scientific consultants who reviewed Dr. Gerbner's research plans requested him to devote special attention to developing a methodology that will allow a meaningful assessment of not only the level of violence in tv but its context and meaning to the viewer. This work is essential to larger efforts to monitor tv violence regularly in a meaningful way useful to those responsible for planning social policy."

## A Public Health Problem

Seattle, May 23.

Violence on television and resulting aggressive behavior by some children is a public health problem. That's one of the opinions voiced by a panel of four at a meeting here last week of the Washington Assn. for Mental Hygiene.

One of the panelists — Dr. Nathaniel N. Wagner, U. of Washington professor of psychology, suggested following the precedent set by the U.S. Surgeon General's report on smoking and health; why not, he said, require television programs depicting violence to carry a warning that watching such shows might be injurious to health.

The panel had as its subject, "Television — The Home Course in Violence"?

Another panelist, Ancil Payne, president of King Broadcasting Co., said the solution was voluntary censorship, which he said is already underway. He said there was not enough evidence that tv violence causes violent behavior, that sex and violence have always been central to drama, and that

(Continued on page 49)

## HEW's 'TViolence'

(Continued from page 35)

there were political assassinations long before the advent of television.

Another panelist, Dr. John Murray, research coordinator for the Surgeon General's Scientific Advisory Committee on Television and Social Behavior, also agreed that more research is needed on the problem. He was not ready to lay the blame for violence in our society on television, but agreed it was one causal factor. He said that perhaps a violence rating system should be established, a report on programs made so that parents could monitor local stations and complain about programs rated violent to the stations, the networks and the sponsors.

Asked to name some programs he considered high in violence, Dr. Murray listed "Mannix," "Hawaii Five-O," "The F.B.I." and "many cartoons."

The consensus of the panelists was that while television violence may produce aggressive behavior in some children, it would be a bigger danger to society to institute overt censorship of television programming.