

CONSORTIUM OF SOCIAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATIONS

1755 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE, N.W., SUITE 300, WASHINGTON, D.C. 20036 • [202] 234-5703

TO: COSSA Members, Affiliates, Contributors and Friends

FROM: Roberta Balstad Miller, Executive Director

COSSA LEGISLATIVE REPORT

June 25, 1982

This Week ...

The Budget is Passed -- What Next?
Mission Agency Research Budgets
Peace Academy Bill Moves Forward
Letter Protests Peer Review Changes at NIE
New Academy Report on Social Science Research
Freedom of Information Act
Congressional Recess
Summer Reading

* * *

The Budget is Passed -- What Next?

With the passage of the compromise budget in the Senate the first budget resolution was completed on Wednesday, June 23. Although the first resolution is not binding, both precedent and the care and attention this budget resolution has received suggest that Members of Congress and the Administration intend to take the budget very seriously.

General Science, Space and Technology (Function 250 in the budget resolution) emerged through the process in relatively good shape. Although the budget that finally passed in the House (the so-called Latta budget) reduced the budget authority in Function 250 by \$750 million, the Senate budget held this area at the original administration level. In the conference committee, scientific research was protected and the Senate figure was selected for the first budget resolution.

There is no reason for complacency, however. This week Michael L. Telson, Professional Staff Member of the House Budget Committee, reminded participants in a AAAS colloquium on R & D

Mission Agency Research Budgets (continued)

Department of Labor. As indicated in last week's COSSA Legislative Report, the DOL research budgets have in the past been tied to manpower training programs. At the present time, they are budgetarily located in the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) of the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA). COSSA has presented testimony to the Natcher Subcommittee stressing the importance of having a separate line-item budget for research, emphasizing the need for basic research on labor markets as important to the core research program of DOL. Experimental programs designed to test the effectiveness of various labor market interventions might still be undertaken within an employment and training program.

The research programs that have been supported by DOL in the past include a number of longitudinal data bases that are widely used to estimate labor supply functions and a set of analytical empirical investigations of labor market behavior based on these and other data bases. DOL currently has no program focused on attempting to understand the demand side of labor markets, which only can be effectively studied by obtaining data from a sampling of establishments. The COSSA testimony urged continuation of the existing longitudinal studies and pointed out the significant research advantages of mounting a modest program of research on labor market demands.

The current budget for these research activities in DOL is roughly \$13 million, down substantially from past years and barely sufficient to maintain the current set of data collections and analyses. To mount a research program on future labor needs and demands would require several million dollars of additional resources.

Support from social scientists could be effective in these two important DOL research budget issues. Members of the Natcher Subcommittee should be urged to provide at least some support for labor market research within DOL. This support should take the form of an independent budget line-item rather than, as presently, be tied totally to employment and training programs. In addition, the Subcommittee should be urged to recognize the importance of maintaining support for existing DOL data bases and analyses of labor supply.

Department of Health and Human Services. In addition to major research programs in such agencies as the National Institutes of Health, the Social Security Administration, and the Health Care Financing Administration, the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE) in HHS has a significant research budget

Letter Protests Peer Review Changes at NIE

The Working Coalition for Educational Research and NIE has sent a letter to Education Secretary Terrell Bell expressing its concerns about recent changes in peer review within the Department of Education. COSSA was one of 25 organizations in the coalition to sign the letter, which calls for immediate steps by the Education Department and the National Institute of Education to restore the integrity of the scientific review process by reinstating the traditional peer-review system. (See attachment 2.)

A New York Times summary of the controversy attendant on recent changes in the membership of the National Council on Educational Research (NCER) is enclosed (attachment 3).

New Academy Report on Social Science Research

At a dinner on June 21 attended by Members of Congress and representatives of the administration, the business community, and the social and behavioral sciences, the National Academy of Sciences/National Research Council released Part I of its report Behavioral and Social Science Research: A National Resource. The report, edited by Robert Mc. Adams, Neil J. Smelser, and Donald J. Treiman, was the product of two years of deliberations by the Academy's Committee on Basic Research in the Behavioral and Social Sciences. Part II of the report, which will be published later, consists of essays on specific areas of research commissioned by the Committee. Copies of the report can be obtained for \$9.95 from the National Academy Press, 2101 Constitution Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20418. A summary of the report from the New York Times is enclosed as attachment 4.

Freedom of Information Act

President Reagan and Senator Orrin Hatch (D-UT) have both recently proposed to alter the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and restrict its reach, claiming that it endangers national security secrets. The proposed changes would make it easier for the Government to withhold information from the public and make it both more difficult and more expensive for citizens to obtain this information. By unanimous decision on May 20, 1982, the Senate Judiciary Committee voted to leave the FOIA primarily the same. The committee did not accept the Reagan administration's proposals for major alterations, but did vote to provide added protection to both the release of

House Appropriations Committee Subcommittee on Labor, Health and
Human Services, and Education.

2358 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515
Phone: 202/225-3508

Majority Members

William H. Natcher, D-KY, 2nd District

Brescia College
Kentucky Wesleyan College
Saint Catharine College
Elizabethtown Community College
Western Kentucky University
University of Kentucky - nearby

Neal Smith, D-IO, 4th District

Central University of Iowa
Des Moines Area Community College
Drake University
Grand View College
Indian Hills Community College
Vennard College
William Penn College
University of Iowa - nearby

David R. Obey, D-WI, 7th District

Mount Senario College
Northland College
University of Wisconsin

Edward R. Roybal, D-CA, 25th District

California State University
East Los Angeles College
Occidental College
Woodbury University
University of So. California - nearby

Louis Stokes, D-OH, 21st District

Case Western Reserve University
Cuyahoga Community College
Notre Dame University - nearby

Joseph Early, D-MA, 3rd District

Clark University
College of the Holy Cross
Worcester State College
University of Massachusetts - nearby

Bernard Dwyer, D-NJ, 15th District

Middlesex County College
Rutgers State University

June 21, 1982

Honorable Terrel Bell
Secretary of Education
Washington, DC

Dear Mr. Secretary:

We in the Working Coalition for Educational Research and NIE request that you and the Acting Director of the National Institute of Education take immediate steps to restore and preserve the integrity of the research proposal review process in NIE and other Education Department research programs. The undersigned members of the Coalition comprise organizations broadly representative of the research and professional communities involved in the American education system.

We are dismayed with the politicization of the peer review process in NIE and other research programs.

The research staff of NIE and of the Department have lost control of the process by which peer reviewers are selected. This is counter to acceptable practices of peer review in federal research agencies. Political appointees in NIE and ED have prepared lists of new reviewers and required their use. These lists have been developed without consultation with the broader education and research communities. A number of reviewers appear to have been selected on the basis of criteria other than their research or professional skills and experience. Particularly troublesome is that one extensive NIE peer review list contains nearly twice as many individuals described as "citizen" or "other" as it contains researchers.

Peer reviewers must have research qualifications or professional experience to provide scientific, technical, and professional judgments of research proposals. The use of political orientation as a criterion for the selection of peer reviewers places the entire research proposal review process, and its contribution to the credibility of federally supported research, in serious jeopardy.

We believe that the basic principles which accompany this letter, if followed by NIE and the Department, will ensure that the proposal review process will be characterized by scientific excellence, fairness, technical competence, and freedom of inquiry. Individuals representing the broad scientific, research, and educational communities must be involved in research review to assure the technical quality of funded work, the advancement of educational knowledge, and the improvement of educational practice.

Coalition member organizations closely monitor the research plans, peer review process, and policy guidance of NIE and other educational research programs. We are preparing comments on NIE's draft plans which we will share with you in the near future. We believe that involving the educational research and practitioner communities in collaborative research planning and proposal review is the most productive path for a federal educational research agency.

Research Battle Stirs Turmoil

By MARJORIE HUNTER

WASHINGTON

LIKE many of his colleagues at the Heritage Foundation, the conservative research organization, Dr. George C. Roche 3d favors abolishing the Department of Education, the National Institute of Education and the policy-making National Council on Educational Research — of which Dr. Roche himself was recently named chairman by President Reagan.

The Administration's choice of a man who wants to abolish his own job is but one of the many recent developments that are producing consternation within the nation's educational research community.

There are four possible endings to the educational research scenario now being written: eliminating all Federal financing of educational research; continuing the Federal commitment to research, but focusing almost entirely on quality education; funneling most of the funds into such areas as tax credits, vouchers that would enable parents to select schools for the children, elimination of racial and gender quotas and other controversial proposals; or returning to the approach favored before the Reagan Administration took office, in which research is primarily devoted to helping the disadvantaged, the handicapped and minority groups in the nation's schools, with an emphasis on equality of opportunity.

The debate now under way has intensified in recent weeks as a result of a series of developments, including these:

¶ President Reagan dismissed 10 of the 15 members of the National Council on Educational Research, among them Harold Howe 2d, a former United States Commissioner of Education, and the Rev. Timothy S. Healy, president of Georgetown University. The move was generally seen as intended to staff the council with people who shared the President's philosophy.

¶ To fill those vacancies on the council, which is the policy-making arm of the National Institute of Education, the President chose largely conservative members, including Dr. Roche, who is the president of Hillsdale College, and two other policy advisers of the Heritage Foundation, Dr. Onalee McGraw and Howard Hurwitz, a former principal of Long Island City High School who is now president of a school management concern in Jamaica, Queens. Dr. Roche, whose college refuses all Federal aid, has vigorously opposed any Federal intervention in its affairs.

¶ Edward A. Curran, until recently the director of the National Institute of Education, announced in April that he would cancel contracts of 17 educational research laboratories and cen-

ters and would open all grants to competition. Even earlier, he had proposed that future research include such topics as school vouchers, tuition tax credits, home instruction and "freedom from excessive mandates and prohibitions enforced by Federal and state agencies."

¶ Two weeks ago Secretary of Education T. H. Bell abruptly dismissed Mr. Curran, not because of the proposed cancellation of grants or the suggested agenda for future research but because Mr. Curran is reported to have gone over the secretary's head by proposing to Mr. Reagan that the institute itself be abolished. Mr. Curran's deputy, Lawrence Uzzell, resigned in protest over the dismissal.

¶ Donald J. Senese, the Assistant Secretary of Education for educational research and improvement, announced in April that he would withdraw Federal grants from 13 school-improvement projects carried out under the department's National Diffusion Network. A Federal judge in Trenton, N.J., has temporarily blocked the withdrawal, pending a ruling on the legality of the action.

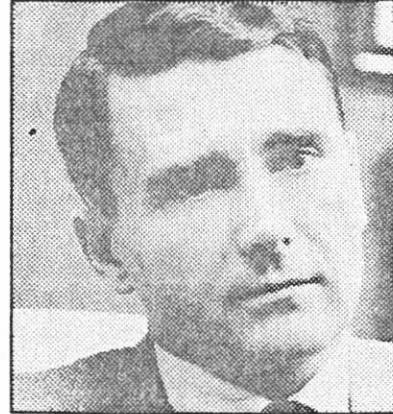
Such liberal educators as Harold Howe and Father Healy are convinced that the Reagan Administration is attempting to inject partisan politics into educational research. They, and others, note that the President wants to abolish the Department of Education and, since Congress has not agreed to do so, Reagan supporters now appear determined to use education research money to espouse their own conservative views.

Ernest L. Boyer, the president of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, who was United States Commissioner of Education under President Carter, says that he finds it "curious, even startling, that so many Reagan appointees in the education field are taking jobs they really don't believe in."

"I can only conclude," he says, "their aim is to tilt ideology, to use funds to reflect their biases."

A recent analysis by the Council for Educational Development and Research, a private group that represents various educational research projects around the country, concludes that efforts to remove the Federal presence in education or, barring that, to use funds to promote conservative causes, are being carried out by a coalition of "New Right, Old Right, Moral Majority, Religious Right and a half-dozen other religious/political tags. Only one label fits them all comfortably, and that is 'Reaganite.'"

Conservatives, on the other hand, have complained for years that Federal research funds were being used to foster liberal causes and that many of those liberal approaches have caused serious deterioration in the schools.



The New York Times / Andrew Sacks

Dr. George C. Roche 3d

In a recent publication for the Heritage Foundation, Dr. McGraw, its chief education consultant and a critic of Federal involvement in education, wrote: "Tragically for a generation of poorly educated students, the concept of the school as a psycho-social clinic for changing the student's behavior and changing society, widely promoted by Federal initiatives and education bureaucrats, has utterly failed."

Secretary of Education Bell himself insists that he is committed to a Federal investment in educational research.

"I have my critics who say there should be no Federal role in education, that not a cent of Federal money should be spent," he said in a recent interview. "I disagree. My feeling is that we ought to have a limited role, a restructured role. We need to place more emphasis on academic achievement as contrasted to values, attitudes and feelings. It just makes sense to do research on the Federal level rather than have 16,000 school districts and 50 states involved in duplication of effort."

In addition to promoting academic achievement, Mr. Bell favors limited, carefully targeted research into use of computers in the classrooms.

"Now, I don't think the Federal Government ought to program curriculums, heaven forbid," he said. "But I think we ought to make grants to those who can and ought to, such as local school officials."

While he favors enactment of a tuition tax credit for parents with children in private schools, Mr. Bell disagrees with some conservatives who think Federal research funds should be used to foster such tax credits or to "promote a school voucher system giving parents greater freedom of choice in selecting public schools for their children.

Saying he is being hit "by the right and the left" — even by Republicans — he said he felt like Winston Churchill when he called his job "a splendid misery." "It's been a bumpy road," Mr. Bell said, "but a lot of fun, too."

New Study Supports the Social Sciences

attachment 4
THE NEW YORK TIMES,
TUESDAY, JUNE 22, 1982

By JAMES P. STERBA

MUCH conventional management wisdom (often meaning whatever the boss thinks) has it that an outfit that is tightly controlled from the top works best. Take up the slack, cut out the fat, get everyone in step, streamline the goals and the result is success, vitality, profits, winning, or whatever else allows the boss to sleep well at night.

The trouble with this, and a great deal of other conventional wisdom, according to social scientists, is that it is wrong — at least some of the time. But some managers do not like to hear that decentralized and loosely controlled organizations are often better at adapting, or that slack, foolishness, and some insubordination often provide new ideas and innovations.

This is an example, from a major new national study, of one of the dilemmas of the social scientist: Many people with large investments in their own conventional wisdom resist being told that it is wrong, especially by outsiders armed with scientific methods but usually not with uncontested scientific proof.

One result, social scientists complain, is that when they are not under attack as a pack of howling charlatans in dogged pursuit of the obvious, they face unfair abuse from guardians of things-as-they-are, bent on branding the social scientists as frivolous, reducing their scientific status, or taking away their research funds.

While acknowledging that they sometimes turn black and white into gray, drown simplicity in a sea of otherhandedness, and camouflage common sense in verbal chintz, the study says that social science as a whole has taken a bum rap.

Designed as something of a counter-attack, a 102-page report on the three-year study by the National Academy of Sciences finds that basic social science research has, in fits and starts and through trial and error, provided a much more various and useful armory of knowledge than it is generally given credit for, and therefore deserves continued Government support.

The report says social and behavioral scientists have made "an impressive array of accomplishments," ranging from data collection, survey research, and analytical methods, to changing perceptions about race and ethnic minorities, to greatly increased general knowledge of how people, societies and institutions behave. It adds that "there is every reason to expect the yield from future research to be as least as great," and concludes:

"Basic research in the behavioral and social sciences is a national resource that should be sustained and encouraged through public support."

According to Frank Press, president of the academy, the committee's report "cites important shifts in conventional wisdom that can be traced to fundamental research in these fields over the last 60 years."

The report gave social science research credit for:

¶ "The reformulation of lay understanding in areas such as racial differences."

¶ "Increasing productivity through knowing how human well-being and organization affects it."

¶ "Invention of information-gathering technologies, such as survey research, that let politicians and officials know what the public really wants."

"Considerable lags occur between specialized advances in knowledge and their wider employment," the report said.

The committee said its "most fundamental conclusion" is that basic social science research should be thought of as "a long-term investment in social capital." It went on:

"The benefits to society of such an investment are significant and lasting, although often not immediate or obvious. A steep reduction in the investment may produce short-run savings, but it would be likely to have damaging long-term consequences for the well-being of the nation and its citizens."

Results Are Adopted Slowly

As with basic research in the natural sciences, the fruits of social science research are often not usable immediately. Work on human evolution, families, and communities turns up insights that cannot be applied in public policy for decades, the report said. It is often "loose, uncertain, incomplete, and slow," and it often turns out to be more of an ally than enemy of common sense.

"Just as a telescope is an extension of the power of the eye, social science is really an extension of the power of common sense," Kenneth Prewitt, a committee member who is president of the Social Science Research Center, said in an interview.

Still, social and behavioral research has been viewed as something of a scientific stepchild by a variety of detractors. One result has been a continuing need for self-analysis and self-justification by social researchers themselves. Since 1968, six major national studies have been commissioned to do one or the other, or both.

"Social scientists have debunked a lot of myths," said David Goslin, executive director of the National Academy's commission on behavioral and social sciences and education. "A lot of people don't like to see their myths exploded. When we say things are a little more complicated than you think, they don't like it."

Some Findings Are Ignored

Social scientists were used, and praised, by the Government for mapping the social trends of the Great Depression. But their discovery, from interviews with Japanese and Germans after World War II, that saturation bombing increased rather than diminishing civilian morale and resistance was largely ignored during the Vietnam conflict.

Their techniques for testing abilities were quickly absorbed by business and industry. But some politicians thought "social science" sounded too much like "socialism" to warrant embrace, and believed social scientists oversold the potential fruits of the social engineering involved in the Great Society programs of the 1960's. And for decades, natural scientists resisted including social scientists as equals in the National Academy of Sciences. The National Science Foundation, the Government funding arm, didn't create a social sciences division until 1968.

The academy's committee, which included a physicist, a former Congressman, a former Cabinet member, and a journalist as well as distinguished social scientists, drew on a wide range of outside experts to assess a wide range of accomplishments.

They reported, for example, that survey research had debunked the early notion that the typical voter makes a rational decision based on candidates' records and positions on issues.

"The myth of the factory as a stronghold of depersonalization has also been debunked," the report said.

Ideas about social stratification have been "radically transformed," the panel found. The role of education in social mobility has been tested and found to be strong.

The panel said that the development of sample surveying was "perhaps the single most important information-gathering invention of the social sciences." Of the development of the standardized ability test, it said "probably no other invention of the social sciences has had as far-reaching an impact on American life."

On economics, the panel said "It is hard to imagine how the economies of the United States and other industrialized nations could function today without the kind of economic information that is routinely available."

Economic Scene | Leonard Silk

The Limits of Social Science

ECONOMISTS and other social scientists have been swept by a wave of pessimism over their failure to solve an array of problems ranging from economic stability and growth to the persistent poverty and political turbulence of large areas of the world.

"Are social problems problems that social science can solve?" asks Herbert A. Simon, a winner of the Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Science who has also done original work in psychology, administrative sciences and artificial intelligence. His is the lead essay in a new volume, "The Social Sciences: Their Nature and Uses," published by the University of Chicago in celebration of the 50th anniversary of its Social Science Research Building.

"Before we succumb to either optimism or pessimism," Mr. Simon says, "we should look at the evidence." He first cites the contributions social scientists have made to solving the three big problems mentioned in Revelations: war, famine and pestilence. He considers these under the less flamboyant labels of war, poverty and disease.

Regarding war, Mr. Simon notes that "almost no one thinks the probability of its occurring — even in the form of nuclear war — is very low." But he feels that game theorists, starting with John von Neumann and Oskar Morgenstern, have made important contributions to understanding the causes of war. A major advance was to describe many war-breeding situations as "prisoners' dilemma games," in which conflict of interest combines with uncertainty in mutual expectations to produce an "unstable, lethal mixture."

In a prisoners' dilemma game, both parties can avoid the worst consequence if they cooperate, but one can win big if he adopts a pre-emptive strategy while the other elects to cooperate. And both will be destroyed if both choose pre-emptive strategies.

In the real world, uncertainty and lack of trust (whether between the Soviet Union and the United States, or Israel and the Arab states) produce instability and a potential for disaster. Understanding that potential is as much as social science can contribute. The solution seems beyond the control of the social scientist, given the difficulty of predicting human behavior.

Poverty, the traditional target of economics, seems more susceptible to rational solution. Superficially, the answer to poverty is an increase in productivity. But Mr. Simon says that this leaves out social causation. For advanced technologies, which raise productivity, to be used effectively, there must be a social and political environment that enables investment and individual initiative to work.

Further, he says, poverty is not an absolute. It is essentially a mental state, not a physical or physiological one, and the target seems constantly to recede under "the revolution of rising expectations."

Not that all poverty is in the mind — hunger and starvation may persist if population growth outruns technological advance.

Mr. Simon sees disease as a technological problem transformed into a social issue. For improved health care has its impact on population growth.

He does not believe it shows a lack of human feeling to express regret that the revolution in food-producing and medical technology preceded a revolution in the biological and social technology for controlling the sizes of population. The ancient means of stabilizing population — war, famine and pestilence — are obviously unacceptable solutions.

But there are some social problems less awesome than the biblical triad. Mr. Simon thinks that the social sciences will succeed better in achieving their goals if they moderate their aspirations. He finds that useful contributions have been made in such areas as organizational decision making (as applied to such bite-sized problems as linear programming or queuing theory) and compensatory education.

He does find that some important books, such as Gunnar Myrdal's "An American Dilemma" and Rachel Carson's "Silent Spring," did have a powerful impact on such major problems as racial discrimination and environmental pollution. In such cases, Mr. Simon says, the combination of irrefutable empirical data and the moral indignation of the author was crucial.

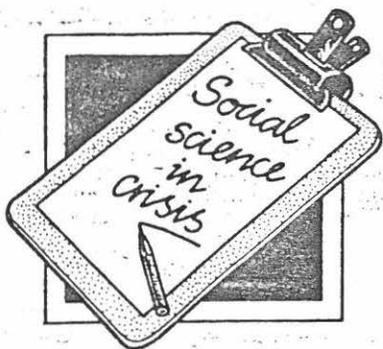
Another Nobel award winner in economics who contributed to the Chicago symposium, Theodore W. Schultz, suggested that one reason economists are not making more of a contribution these days is that they lack moral purpose and have to a large extent been co-opted by business and political clients.

Mr. Schultz charged that instead of devoting themselves to comprehensive social and economic criticism, the economists are increasingly devoting themselves to satisfying their corporate or political customers, who pay them very well for their work.

"Economists are too complacent about their freedom of inquiry," Professor Schultz says. "They are not sufficiently vigilant in safeguarding their function as educators. They should give a high priority to scholarly criticism of economic doctrines and of society's institutions." He warns that the distortion of economic research will not fade away if the economists continue to accommodate the patrons of research.

Economic and social problems are tough enough to crack without economists themselves becoming part of the problem — by becoming "guns for hire."

April 9, 1982



Social science is under siege on both sides of the Atlantic. Peter David looks at America and Donald Fields at the Nordic countries

Lysenko's odd ally in the White House

There are striking similarities between the politics of social science funding in the United States and the United Kingdom. Like Britain the US filters much government aid for basic social research through a semi-independent "buffer": the National Science Foundation (NSF).

Like their British counterparts also, American social scientists have suffered disproportionate cuts at the hands of an administration which makes no secret of its aversion to social science. And in America as in Britain, the conflict over research funding has been perceived by social science as a challenge not only to its financial health but also to its academic legitimacy.

But there are differences. Unlike the SSRC, which is very much the vulnerable younger cousin of the "hard" research councils, American social research is funded directly through the multidisciplinary NSF. Its inclusion with the natural sciences gives social science a measure of institutional protection and confers on it on a scientific dignity which can help to ward off unfriendly administrations.

The value of this protection was felt keenly last year when the incoming Reagan administration proposed cutting the social and economic research share of the foundation budget by a staggering 75 per cent on the grounds that social science was "relatively less important to the economy".

A consortium of social science associations was able to persuade Congress to reduce the cut to 26 per cent by casting the issue as one of the independence of science. And that was possible only because the natural science establishment in the NSF was affronted - and perhaps frightened - by the victimization of their social science colleagues. Dr John Slaughter, the foundation's director, told Congress that social sciences played a critical, "sometimes pre-eminent" role in solving the nation's problems.

Of course the NSF, like the SSRC, is not a buffer made of steel. Its budget, and the allocation of funds among the disciplinary directorates, is the product of complex negotiations in which the views of its own bureaucracy seldom prevail against those of the presidentially-appointed National Science Board and the White House Office of Management and Budget.

The Buffer is not made of cotton wool either. Unlike Britain, the American budget process involves detailed parliamentary scrutiny of science funding. At least two committees in each house of Congress pick through the president's spending plans for the NSF and they are all lobbied by the academic community.

The administration succeeded in inflicting serious damage on social science last year, not only through its spending cut but also by shifting the emphasis of the big medical research agencies away from social scientific and towards biomedical approaches to mental illness. Paradoxically, though, its victory then may rebound to damage the White House this year.

Alarmed by congressional charges of "Lysenkoism," the administration has proposed no further cuts in social research in its 1983 NSF budget. But last year's move had so galvanized the social science community that Congress has now been exposed to insistent argument that the social science component of NSF spending is so valuable that some of the cuts should be restored. To the chagrin of the office, the house science and technology committee has voted to restore social science funding to its 1980 level, which would mean virtually doubling the allocation suggested by the president.

Why should Congress turn out to be so supportive? One reason advocated by champions of social science is that the administration erred last year in proposing such an unfairly

large cut that the issue became one of almost constitutional significance. Congress, which at times can be fetishistic about constitutional proprieties, disapproved of the White House imposing a political or ideological decision on a supposedly neutral science foundation. A slower chiseling away of the social science budget might have attracted less attention.

Another reason is that the social science community was able to produce a convincing argument that NSF support for its disciplines was important academically and served the national interest. In 1980 government departments spent more than 780m on social science research, with the NSF accounting for only \$50m.

The departments of health, agriculture and defence each spent more on social science than the NSF. Yet the NSF was virtually the only source of federal support for basic, scholar-initiated and disinterested research. Some disciplines, like economics, depended on the foundation for 70 per cent of federally funded research in colleges and universities. Others, like the history and philosophy of science, were nearer 90 per cent.

Even more importantly, Congress was told - and appears to have accepted - that cutting funds would take the "science" out of social science. Data, Banks, econometric surveys and computer resources would be damaged leaving theoretical social science to sprout and spout without a firm empirical ballast.

If social science research survives the Reagan challenge it will be due partly to structural features of the American research scene which the SSRC can hardly emulate: close institutional links with the natural sciences and real parliamentary influence over and interest in science policy. But it will also be due to the fact that social scientists organized politically and won the intellectual argument in favour of government support for disinterested basic social research. British social science does not have a Congress to win for its team, but there is no reason why it should not capture Lord Rothschild.