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(Letters)

"FAMILY PLANNING AND PUBLIC POLICY: WHO IS MISLEADING WHOM?"

In their article (25 July, p. 367) Harkavy, Jaffe, and Wishik are, in effect, defending their own effort to influence the federal government regarding population policy. Harkavy and Jaffe are executives with organizations that promote "family planning" (the Ford Foundation and Planned Parenthood), and Wishik is a director of a university-based family planning program. Their past influence is not only directly visible in their consultants' report criticizing HEW's population program for not pushing family planning more aggressively, but it is indirectly evident in the authors' presence (one, two, or all) on committees and hearings concerning population, each appearing to give "independent" but somehow unanimous advice to government agencies, Congress, and the President (1). My questioning of the alleged facts and logic supporting their advice has led them to charge me with statements I never made, nonuse of data they have carelessly overlooked in my article, and failure to include unpublished materials to which I had no access. In their anxiety to discredit my analysis, they even deny their own erstwhile goal of population control.

They begin by using over 1000 words to accuse me of claiming that there is "a consensus on U.S. population stability," or "zero population growth," as a goal. I made no such claim. I said that "action to *limit* population growth is virtually unchallenged as an official national goal," a statement implying neither zero increase nor popular consensus. If anyone doubts that population *limitation* is endorsed, and endorsed officially, he may consult President Johnson, John W. Gardner, the Republican National Platform and, recently, Senator Tydings' 8 May 1969 speech introducing S. 2108 (2). These endorsements have gone unchallenged—that is, until Harkavy *et al*, suddenly disavowed them.

Although every major proposal for federally supported family planning is phrased in terms of the need to stem population growth, my three critics now say that "the federal program has been advanced, not for population control, but to improve health and reduce the impact of poverty and deprivation." This constitutes the first explicit admission by family planning leaders that their interest in contraception is not to be equated in any way with population "planning," "control," or "policy." If this is really their view, it contradicts their past role in this field.

If the federal program is to improve health and reduce poverty, as my critics now claim, is it wanted and needed by the prospective recipients? The documents I criticized claim that the poor prefer fewer or no more children than the well-to-do, but the facts I cited show that this claim is not true and that it exaggerates the demand for birth-control services among the disadvantaged. This evidence comes principally from national polls, but it comes *also* from the only two national fertility surveys (1955 and 1960) available in print, which my critics falsely say I "ignored." In trying further to discredit the evidence, the authors' unfamiliarity with the literature leads them to cite criticisms of a question (the ideal size for the average American family) which was not asked on the polls I used. They also darkly impugn respondents' own statements of ideal family size, they prefer number of children "wanted" or

NOTE.—Numbered references at end of article.