

TV: Right-Wing Propaganda and Razor Blades

'Hitler in Havana' Gets Documentary Label

By JACK GOULD

THE danger of allowing a corporation to buy television time for the expression of fervent anti-Communist views was suggested again by the presentation of a program called "Hitler in Havana." The so-called news documentary, seen on Tuesday evening on WOR-TV, was a tasteless affront to minimum journalistic standards.

With inflammatory words and pictures but no pretense to hard documentation, the program invited the conclusion that Premier Fidel Castro, through use of propa-

ganda, aroused Lee Harvey Oswald to violence and therefore was responsible for the assassination of President Kennedy.

After newsreel scenes of the murder of the President, the program went on to contend that Communist influences in this country wanted "to get a grip on the minds of a minority of American youngsters and convert them into carbon copies of Lee Harvey Oswald."

"Hitler in Havana" was produced and narrated by Edward Scannell Butler, executive vice president of the Information Council of the Americas, which specializes in the production of radio recordings to combat Communism in Latin America.

By coincidence, the program

stressed the need for supporting such so-called "truth tipes" lest college campuses in the United States be converted into "armed camps" and young people turned "against God, country and family and toward la dolce vita."

Mr. Butler's utilization of the tragedy at Dallas as an emotional springboard to mobilize anti-Communist sentiment assumes significance only because of the backing that his program enjoys. It was sponsored by Patrick J. Frawley Jr., president of Eversharp, Inc., in behalf of Schick safety razor blades.

No one should deny Mr. Frawley every right of free speech, but it does seem time that stations carrying his right-wing TV offerings identify them in the same manner as they identify other paid political broadcasts.

At the close of "Hitler in Havana" there was not a word by WOR-TV that the sponsor was one of the country's most ardent activists in anti-Communist movements and that Mr. Butler was the first professionally committed to toppling the subject of his program.

Instead, in an incredible pictorial lapse, a scene of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington was divided in such a way as to provide a framework for Schick blades.

In other respects, "Hitler

Program Is Presented on WOR for Schick

in Havana" was the crudest form of propaganda, employing the tactics it professed to deplore. Its tone had the mounting hysteria and tension and the disregard of facts that the program was shrilly denouncing in the case of Nazism and Castroism. Simulated dramatization of Castro's voice in English and the juxtaposition of pictures out of context were among the assorted abuses of the documentary form.

The management of WOR said yesterday it had cleared "Hitler in Havana" because it had been placed by a reputable sponsor, because an independent station could not hope to pay for the production of its own documentaries and because it felt the program's views fell within the reasonable bounds of differing opinion.

The flaw in the station's rationale is that whoever has the money to finance the presentation of his opinion can be heard to the exclusion of those who do not have such resources. If the affluent element of the extreme right wing makes a striking anti-Communist rallying cry out of the Kennedy assassination, the station has an obligation to carry the views of those who are no less patriot but deplore such a development.

Acceptance of a program of sponsored opinion should not include a built-in waiver of suitable reply.