

COMMUNICATIONS

To the Editor:

I have just gone over the Spring issue of *P.S.* which included the preliminary program of the September annual meeting.

I am at a loss to understand why APSA—again—is paying no attention to the most neglected and one of the most important segments of government, the regulatory commissions, State and Federal.

Some political scientists think these commissions need attention. Some of their comments are available from my office.

Lee Metcalf
U.S. Senate

To the Editor:

I am writing to describe the Conference for the Study of Political Thought, founded at Glendon College, York University, in Toronto, December, 1967.

The purpose of the Conference is described in its Constitution as the encouragement, development, and advancement of the study of political thought as an essential part of the study of man. There is a humanist tradition or style in the analysis of politics. It is interdisciplinary and incorporates a number of systematic theories developed from classical antiquity to the present, as well as historical treatments of the context in which ideas were formulated. Its definition of politics is not narrow. Some of its concerns are philosophical; others sociological. The members of the Conference hold that this humanist style is an integral part of the disciplines treating politics, that it has more power than any other to engage thinking men in rational dialogue about the ends of politics and the means permissible for their attainment; that those trained without knowledge of this tradition are incomplete as men, citizens, and political analysts; and that the study of politics, if reduced to a science of behavior, leaves to the demagogues and ideologues that all-important area where ethics and politics converge in the discussion of purposes and goals. It cannot be supposed that fundamental discussion will be deferred indefinitely because some declare that such matters cannot be treated by science as they understand it. The problems that beset and divide us as citizens and scholars are none other than those that have preoccupied the great political thinkers. Their modes of setting forth these issues, their procedures for adjudicating among

rival claims, their proposals for solutions are the most disciplined available to us.

This is not to assert that everything worth saying has already been said, or that students of political thought have in fact been doing everything that ought to be done in their subject. On these points, the Conference is neither complacent nor sectarian. Its founding members do not believe that the study of political ideas should be limited to any one approach. They believe rather that the different modes of engaging in this work, and the different reasons for doing so ought to be brought together and compared, and that the consequences of doing this will be to stimulate further and much-needed activity. Certainly most should continue their examination of the history of political thought, or their philosophical analysis of concepts and values. Others may be led to extend their concern to matters, which for a variety of reasons have been relatively ignored, the study of systematic thinking about politics as a phenomenon highly significant for its practical effects upon society; the study of empirical methods and theories developed by past political thinkers; the consideration of the intellectual means appropriate for proceeding from general principles to their application in particular cases.

Above all, the Conference believes that we are on the verge of a renaissance of political philosophy in the traditional sense. Thus its members wish to promote that creative, interdisciplinary, and humanist tradition which ought to inform all those concerned with politics. Our task, as we see it, is to understand and forward this tradition, and to participate in it by applying it to our own situation.

The Conference's first order of business is intellectual. Hence it is organized to the greatest possible extent, not as a mass membership association, but in working groups. Each decides its own format, interests, membership and schedules. The national office is designed to facilitate communication and cooperation among its component units and individual members.

Anyone interested in the activities of the Conference should contact me at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, 33 West 42nd Street, New York, New York 10036. [See *THE PROFESSION* for information about the Conference for the Study of Political Thought.]

Melvin Richter
City University of New York

To the Editor:

As political scientists we wish to dissociate ourselves from the judgements made by Professors Richard Scammon, Howard Penniman and Donald Herzberg concerning the recent elections in South Vietnam. These three observers, sent by the American government to judge the voting process there, reported the election to be, in Professor Scammon's words, "reasonably fair."

In our opinion, these three observers could not possibly have reached any firm conclusions about the honesty of the voting process on the basis of their stay in South Vietnam—which, according to the *New York Times*, covered only four days and involved visits to only a handful of polling places. No serious scholar could hope to achieve clarity in so complex a matter on the basis of such inadequate data.

But more important, it is our belief that any attempt to judge a "voting" process in isolation from the nomination and campaign processes which preceded it, is doomed to be superficial at best. Professors Scammon, Penniman and Herzberg, however, have tried to maintain the legitimacy of just such a separation between these processes. But democracy

does not involve the ballot alone. It was common knowledge that certain candidates were prohibited from running because of their political views. There were widespread reports, according to the *New York Times*, of "pressure by district and province officials on behalf of the winning Thieu-Ky ticket and the dismissal of officials who favored other candidates." Government radio time was limited to 15 minutes per ticket. Candidates were allotted campaign funds so small that none could organize in more than half the provinces of South Vietnam. Clearly, the election process, taken as a whole, was not "reasonably fair." We doubt the meaningfulness of any election held under present conditions.

In our opinion, neither their hurried judgement of the voting process, nor their efforts to isolate that process from all that came before it, was good political science. Professors Scammon, Penniman and Herzberg do not speak for the political science profession. Whether intentionally or not they only lent a false legitimacy to the grotesque.

Lewis Lipsitz
University of North Carolina

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To the Editor:

I gratefully appreciate the opportunity you have offered me to comment on the letter or petition circulated by Lipsitz. I have read it carefully and see no need to defend my actions.

My colleagues in political science obviously have the right to associate with or disassociate from whomever they wish. I have noted that Lipsitz and the other signers do not wish to associate with Richard Scammon, Howard Penniman or me.

Donald G. Herzberg
*Eagleton Institute,
 Rutgers-The State University*

To the Editor:

I appreciate your sending me the Lipsitz letter for comment. At the same time, I want to make it very clear that I believe it to be a grave error for the American Political Science Association to open its official journals for attacks by one group of political scientists on other political scientists for their actions as private citizens.

We did not go to Vietnam as representatives of the Association or of the political science

profession. (As a matter of fact, we were never referred to as political scientists in any articles on the Vietnamese elections that appeared in the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *Washington Evening Star*, or the *Baltimore Sun*, or, as far as I am aware, in any stories filed by the United Press International or the Associated Press.) We went as private citizens at the request of the President of the United States. Others in the group went on the same basis. No one has suggested that Senators George Murphy or Edmund Muskie were representing the Republican or Democratic parties or that Mr. Whitney Young was speaking for the Negro community. There is no more reason to suggest that we were attempting to "speak for" the political science profession.

Some members of the profession now more or less regularly take actions or publish letters or sign advertisements on behalf of candidates or policies that are not to my liking. It never has occurred to me that I therefore had a claim on space in an official publication of the Association to make known my differences in views.

I sincerely hope that the Executive Committee and the Council, having considered the potential disruption of the Association that can follow if the present misuse of the official

journals is to become permanent policy, will take appropriate action to prevent such a development.

As for the content of the Lipsitz letter, I shall leave its errors of logic, fact, and interpretation to each of my colleagues to examine for himself.

I will, nonetheless, allow myself the luxury of quoting from one faculty member who, in a covering memorandum *urging his colleagues to join him in signing the Lipsitz letter*, said of it: ". . . The letter is not perfect. Certain phrases, assumptions and errors of commission/ommission inevitably create questions. . . ." which is not bad for a letter only four paragraphs long.

Howard Penniman
Georgetown University

To the Editor:

In connection with the Lipsitz letter you are publishing, I would associate myself with the comments of my colleagues, Professors Herzberg and Penniman, especially with Dr. Penniman's views respecting private work of individual political scientists.

Richard M. Scammon
Elections Research Center

To the Editor:

I sent the following message to Professor Lipsitz upon seeing his letter, which you may wish to include in *P.S.*:

"Dear Professor Lipsitz:

"If political scientists are to institutionalize disassociative behavior, I would suggest a simpler scheme than the one you and your friends have proposed, one which avoids the labors of gathering signatures from far and wide.

"Each issue of *P.S.* could contain a postcard reading "In the period from to (appropriate dates to be supplied), the following political scientists have engaged in behavior from which I want to disassociate myself." These cards should be returned promptly to the editor and the following issue of *P.S.* in a regular section of "Disassociations," perhaps located between "Promotions" and "Obituaries"—could summarize the totals.

"Perhaps at the Annual Meeting an award could be given to the political scientist most disassociated from. This would provide zest to the undertaking—and a news lead.

John P. Roche
*Special Consultant to
the President*