

Communications

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To the Editor:

In the fall 1974 *PS* I observed that the *APSR* book review section betrayed a consistent establishmentarian bias in the books selected and the persons chosen for reviewing. In the same issue Dr. Albert Somit made certain representations about my article which deserve rebuttal. The brevity of my response is a result of the space limitations imposed by the editors of *PS*.

1. Somit correctly notes that I did not make a detailed statistical breakdown of the kind so beloved by some professional colleagues. But from this he mistakenly concludes that I offered no firm data. In fact, I noted that (a) of the hundreds of books written in recent years by socialists and other left-oriented dissenters on every subject from imperialism to pluralism, only seven were reviewed in the *APSR*. Of these, six were given hostile reviews by central political scientists. (b) Of the hundreds of books supportive of the policies of the established politico-economic system reviewed in the *APSR*, none were reviewed by dissident political scientists. I maintain that this near-zero trend as presented in my article is a rather hard datum made no softer by the absence of a four-fold table.

2. Somit asserts: "With a modest exercise of effort one could probably find enough 'examples' in the book review pages to give equal verisimilitude to a charge of left-wing bias—or whatever type of prejudice one sought to establish." Such innocence coming from the book review editor of *Polity* is touching. I challenge Somit to make the modest effort, being as selective as he wants, to demonstrate a left-wing bias in the review pages of the *APSR*. And while he is at it, he might try doing the same for *Polity*.

3. I observed that our ideological perspectives have an unavoidable effect on our scholarly perceptions. But from this, Somit has me saying that dialogue between different believers is impossible. My position is that dialogue is all the more essential. To quote from my article: "... If our political biases and presumptions are often inescapable then all the more reason we should become aware of them, holding them up to scrutiny and to the test of argument and evidence." And, "Establishment political prejudices persist unchallenged thereby allowing important empirical questions to remain unexamined or to be settled by assertion and injunction rather than by evidence and a free exchange of conflicting ideas." My view is not that Marxists and anti-Marxists are incapable of exchanging data and analyses but that they are usually prevented from doing so by the monopolizing interests of the latter.

4. If Marxist and anti-Marxist can exchange scientific evidence and argument, as Somit

agrees, then why not make it a two-way exchange? Will Dr. Somit invite socialists to review books written by centrists on subjects of political significance?

5. Somit's assertion that centrist political scientists are capable of passing unbiased judgments on the work of radicals overlooks the fact that they seldom do. Like everyone else, centrists indulge their prejudices. The best antidote to establishment prejudice and orthodoxy is to widen the ideological and ideational field, and allow for the challenges that come with diversity of in-put? If that's what we want for the USSR, why not for the *APSR*?

Michael Parenti
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To the Editor:

I am writing on behalf of the Charles E. Merriam Award Committee to invite candidates for the award. The APSA has authorized the establishment of a Merriam Award to be granted at the award ceremony of the Annual APSA meeting. This award will be made to "a person whose published work and career represent a significant contribution to the arts of government through the application of social science research." There will be an initial award of \$500.

Merriam's own range of interest will be a guide to the committee in the selection of that person. Among his most striking attributes were the catholicity of his disciplinary concerns, and the continual articulation of his research with problems of public policy. He was a theorist who bridged normative and behavioral concerns, and who insisted on including in his definition of theory practitioners whose actions implied doctrine even where they did not formally formulate it. He was a student of party and electoral behavior who attended to the national arena as well as to urban politics in the Chicago community. He was a practitioner and observer of administrative action and reform, in the National Resources Planning Board, the Brownlow Committee, and the founding of the Public Administration Clearing House. He was a promoter, through the founding of the Social Science Research Council and the writing of multi-disciplinary works, of the social sciences as an arena of research beyond the boundaries of particular disciplines. The committee is inclined to assume that the combination of interests that Merriam represents can also be found among those who study and influence the practice of government beyond the boundaries of the university or the United States.

The terms of the award do not restrict the committee to deciding on a political scientist or on the basis of a specific publication. We

assume political scientists may have some, but no exclusive, advantage in our councils, and that we will recognize careers as well as books. We would feel free and even eager to recognize distinguished careers before they are over.

My colleagues, James Q. Wilson and Avery Leiserson, and I would be grateful for your nominations. We would appreciate a brief paragraph giving the reason for each nomination.

Please send nominating letters to Professor Susanne Hoeber Rudolph, Department of Political Science, University of Chicago, Pick 422, 5828 South University Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60637.

Susanne Hoeber Rudolph
University of Chicago
and Chairperson,
Charles E. Merriam Award Committee

To the Editor:

As an anthropologist, I am seeking data for a research project studying the role of bandits (outlaws) and the expansion of the American frontier and its development. The time span to be studied is from pre-revolutionary days to the post-Depression era (pre-W.W. II).

I would like to know the names and addresses of any living informants, plus the addresses of private and public libraries (village, town, state), personal diaries, letters, published books, articles, unpublished manuscripts, theses dissertations, which will yield the following information: gang size (number) and composition (sex, age, place of birth, socio-economic background), location of offenses committed, what kinds of offenses perpetrated and how much money or goods gained, gang locales, i.e., where gangs recuperated or sought safety, ties with family and friends while being an outlaw, extent and kind of "civilian" (non-bandit) moral and material support (suppliers, harborers, informers, spies, etc.), relationships/contracts between gangs and extent of their cooperation, life within gangs (rules, regulations, taboos), involvement in the "civilian" life of villages, towns, cities (especially in political and economic affairs and contacts with politicians and decision makers), prestige ranking among gangs, and ideas concerning codes of honor or ethics among gang members. Send to: Paul C. Winther, P.O. Box 533, Dept. of Sociology & Anthropology, Eastern Kentucky University, Richmond, Kentucky 40475.

Paul C. Winther
Eastern Kentucky University

To the Editor:

In his recent article on Presidential Papers (*PS*, Volume VII, No. 1, p. 15) Professor Clement E. Vose made an error in asserting that it is the policy of the Department of State "to require the scholar to submit his notes and his manuscript for review should the information be judged damaging by the Department." This was the Department's policy for many years, but it was changed (for the better, I think) three years ago. Since Dr. Vose did not criticize the policy, my object in writing this commentary is not to argue but simply to enlighten.

Professor Vose cites as his authority Dr. Herman Kahn's article of 1972 in the "Yale Alumni Magazine," but unfortunately that article was out of date, with respect to State Department policy, before it was published. In January 1972, after long preparation by the Historical Office, the Department's regulations on access to records were altered so that the Department's files would be either open or closed to all unofficial researchers, with no special privileges and no requirement of submitting notes or manuscripts for review. We think that this is a far more equitable arrangement and one more in keeping with progressive archival principles and the egalitarian spirit of the Freedom of Information Act. Certainly it has greatly eliminated frictional encounters between cautious bureaucratic censors and less inhibited academic spirits.

William M. Franklin
Director, Historical Office
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