

Letters to the Editor

Maryland Not on AAUP Censure List

Editor's Note: PS regrets that we did not remove the University of Maryland from the AAUP Censure List published in September. We hope that this note and the following letter will notify the profession that the University of Maryland is not under censure.

I would like to call your attention to an unfortunate error which appeared in the September issue of *PS*. On pages 541-542 of that issue, you reprint a list of universities which are purported to be on the AAUP censure list, as of the May-June 1990 issue of *Academe*. I am enclosing page 2 of the May-June issue of *Academe*, and you will note that the University of Maryland is *not* on that list. I am also enclosing a letter from the AAUP to Chancellor Toll, dated April 17, 1989, indicating that the University of Maryland had been removed from the list of Censured Administrations. . . .

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On National Registration Law

I have very much enjoyed the exchange between Piven and Cloward advocating a national registration law and Bennett and then Gans arguing that it is unlikely that such a law would have the impact suggested by Piven and Cloward's "abuse" of registration and turnout data in *PS*, June, 1990. I would like to enter additional complicating data, and then straddle the fence by saying why not go even further and emulate that more participant democracy to our north, Canada.

Two facts are ignored by all of these authors with the limited exception of Gans. First is that the decline

in turnout is not limited to presidential voting but extends to congressional as well as to state legislative contests. The second is that the decline is not at all constant across the country; some states have experienced nearly a one percent per year decline in all state and national turnouts (Luttbeg, 1984). Others, those in the South, have seen a very modest increase in turnout (Gans recognizes this, but makes nothing of it). I think that both sides in this exchange have difficulty with accounting for these facts. Piven and Cloward would have to argue that the "complex and interactive" effect between the decline of party and of registration procedures was greatest in West Virginia, Wyoming, and New Hampshire (those declining most) and least in Alaska, Hawaii, and Maine (apart from the South, those declining least). Similarly, Bennett's explanation, "weakening partisanship, less belief in citizens' political influence, and decreased psychological involvement" would have to covary with these differential rates of decline. They do not; I tried them (Luttbeg, 1985).

I am convinced by Powell's (1984) analysis that other factors may better account for low American turnout than does our unique registration requirement, but that is not to say that our requirement to register before voting is unimportant. While I know all of the arguments for registration, such as fraud and is it too big an obstacle given even modest interest to require registration, other countries have neither suffered nor flourished without registration. I do not expect much of an improvement, but why not follow Canada to get the 10 to 15 percent higher turnout there? There representatives of the two major political parties "must" visit every potential voter within the two weeks prior to the election to see if they are registered and, if not, if they want to register on the spot. I believe the state pays these registrars which would also encourage local party activity. Let's give it a whirl.

References

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- _____. 1985. "Attitudinal Components of Turnout Decline." *Social Science Quarterly* 66: 435-43.
- Powell, G. Bingham. 1984. "Voting Turnout in Thirty Democracies: Partisan, Legal, and Socio-Economic Influences." In *Controversies in Voting Behavior*, 2nd Ed., ed. Richard G. Niemi and Herbert F. Weisberg. Washington: CQ Press.

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More on Applied Political Science

While I can find much to agree with in both the comments of Gary Andres and Janice Beecher (*PS*, XXII, 3; Sept. 1989) and also those of Harry Eckstein (*PS*, XXIII, 1; March, 1990) on the subject of "applied political science," the discussion seems to be inadequate, inconclusive and unsatisfying. The issue of importance is not whether there ought to be an applied political science, for as a matter of fact political science has many useful and accepted applications, but rather the place of the notion of applications in the curriculum, the "profession" and the community.

Professor Eckstein is of course correct that the worlds of scholarship and affairs are governed by different imperatives and may be interpreted as having different structures. I would sum it up by saying that the scholar seeks to understand the world while the policy maker seeks to change it. If we can evade any dispute about the unity of theory and practice, not to mention quotes from Maynard Keynes about the influence of obscure scribblers, we can grasp the fundamental differences that will result from these two stances. If not, imagine as an analogy a boxing match and the differences in attitude, appreciation and expectation between the fighters and ringside judges. The

different stances make a lot of difference.

Well known commercial applications of political science are in the occupations of campaign management, public opinion surveying and analysis, public organization management, political risk assessment and public policy analysis in political institutions, public agencies, non-profit associations and profit-making enterprises. These occupations are not recognized as professions but they are real jobs that at least seek to affect the way the world works. Whether their practitioners are political scientists is a matter of nomenclature and degrees in their backgrounds.

Clearly, however, political science is not an applied discipline, any more than are physics or biology. Political scientists do not comprise a profession insofar as a profession involves the practice of some learned skill in the interests of an identifiable clientele even though we do, in my opinion, comprise a recognized branch of the academic profession whose clientele is students. But like physicists who practice applied physics as part of engineering and biologists who apply biology in collaboration with medicine, political scientists can be found teaching in law schools, business and management schools, planning schools and schools of public policy, all of which presumably turn out practitioners who enter the world of affairs.

Still Professor Eckstein's Washington experience is significant. In those heady years, more than one among us found personal acceptance if not policy compliance as part, perhaps a peripheral part indeed, but still part of the "best and brightest." We believed we could help and we were obliged to "ask not." And we did not ask. Yet upon reflection we might better have asked something like: were our informed but still arm chair thoughts on insurgency, or rural development, or for that matter on poverty really sound enough, persuasive enough, to bet the store on?

These days we are suffering from the backlash—intellectual, moral, emotional—from those difficult times, particularly among our colleagues in their middle years who were students then. Our discipline

seems to me to be in the glare of two trends that together drive us more and more to extremes of abstraction and purity in an apotheosis of pure science worthy of the great 19th century Prussian tradition. One trend displays the formalities of micro-economics and the other the vapors of Franco-German sociology. Professor Eckstein would like to rescue us from that, I think, and I am with him.

Political science, historically, was a discipline that aspired to be applied. Hopes—nay expectations—of government and legal reform surely inspired and moved our founders. Their efforts were in fact not in vain and one of our own rose to the White House itself. In the course of development we may perceive a drift, a secular trend, toward the more pure—dispassionate, empirical and abstract—shedding along the way the reformist and practical segments of our collective enterprise.

Various speculations about motivation may be offered to illuminate the course of these developments. The most plausible to me is that it was the *geist* of post-war academia to applaud, not only research above teaching not to mention other forms of practice, but pure, basic research over applied research. This was the case across the campuses, even in professional schools, and was supported in many fields by the federal government. Political science was not overcome with dollars, however, but with emulation.

The retrospectively bad time of the sixties probably drove some away from real world and certainly disillusioned many with applied political science. The rather disparate efforts, on the one hand, to rationalize the world and, on the other, to re-enchant it may plausibly be seen as reinforced by a passionate reaction against those ancient sins.

Yet, as I said before there are applications. They are creeping back into our activities no matter what we think. By our corporate denial, we do a disservice to students and perhaps ourselves. These days we know that students are vocationally oriented. We deplore their shallowness and materialism, never having experienced a careerist thought in all our long lives.

Students have every reason to expect us to concern ourselves with their welfare which we are happy to do so long as they apply to the right schools. In my opinion, the discipline should also develop a display of the several occupational lines available that draw on political science specialties so that students can orient themselves to the possibilities in a timely and informed way. Whether anyone wants to create curricular concentrations or degree programs explicitly directed toward such specialties is too complex a question to even sketch here.

Beecher and Andres seem to hope that political scientists as such should become employable outside of academia by being prepared to predict the future. This notion is both simplistic and off the point. What seems to me to be wanted is a recognition in the discipline that political science has developed approaches—combining theory and technique—that permit some sophistication in estimating the consequences or areas of consequences likely to follow upon various courses of action. This recognition would make it feasible to certify that certain political scientists are adept at these approaches, that is they are certified applied political scientists. Whether this is second class political science remains to be seen.

It is a pity that, given the increasing power of political science theory and technique, the ethos of the discipline is drawing us away from the world. As students used to shout at me years ago in disgust at my dispassionate teaching about the politics of Thailand, "People are dying out there!" Our *fin d'siecle* has a lot of problems that could use our attention. Let me suggest a couple. It is certainly possible that the cost of commercial television fills a role in American politicking roughly analogous to that of fluorocarbons in the atmosphere. Television and its consequences eat up money the way fluorocarbons eat up ozone with comparable resultant toxic exposures to the body politic. Maybe a concentrated application of political science to this "problem" could stay the worst before it is too late.

Second example: the broad and profound effects of the emerging capacity to analyze and manipulate

the genetic character of living things, including us, has such intricate and far reaching potential consequences that we may be quite stupefied, and rightly so. A fair amount has been written about this but very little of it represents a concerted and serious attack by applied political science or social science. It really is a big and perilous matter.

Here at the end I can only conjure the memory of great applied political scientists in our not too distant past who made progress while addressing real world problems. My late colleague Bernard Brodie created a whole subspecialty with his daring work on the "problem" of nuclear weapons. My late colleague James S. Coleman together with Gabriel Almond, Lucien Pye and others made area studies almost respectable while cracking the nut of politics in post colonia. Perhaps we can draw from that tradition the courage

needed to undertake a commitment not only to the link between political science and the "real" world of public life but also to the conviction that political scientists can and should contribute to the reduction of that world's difficulties.

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On Book Reviews

Newspaper critics hate being sent to high school plays. They know that if they fail to say that the local production of *Hamlet* is the equal of anything that the Old Vic ever has done, they will receive irate letters from parents. Silly me, I thought that such "boosterism" was inappropriate when "we write for other scholars." "30-Second 'Scholarly' Sound Bites" (*PS*, September 1990, p. 409) shows how wrong I was.

In order that all of us, not just "other young members of the profession," may learn some valuable lessons, I would like to share the following with other book reviewers. (1) When you review the first book of a new Ph.D., be certain to say that it is the most brilliant work since Plato. Any praise short of that will be regarded as a negative review. (2) Don't raise any questions or doubts. That would suggest that the book might be less than completely perfect. (3) Don't quote any passages. Whatever lines you might find room for in a review will be denounced as out of context.

In short, do not treat a young Ph.D. as a mature scholar. A balanced, objective, positive review will only get you an *ad hominem* attack in reply.

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