

Ethics Committee Issues Advisory Opinions

The Committee on Professional Ethics, Rights and Freedoms, chaired by Nancy Zingale of the College of Saint Thomas, has issued a new Advisory Opinion on joint authorship and has amended another on the use of the APSA title for political purposes.

The purpose of Advisory Opinions is to guide the political scientists in their ethical conduct. The 19 Advisory Opinions issued by the Committee since its inception in 1969, along with certain documents of the American Association of University Professors, the 1968 Report of the Committee on Professional Standards and Responsibilities, and directives of the APSA Council and Business Meeting, together comprise the code of ethics of the profession.

The new Advisory Opinion reads as follows:

Advisory Opinion No. 19 Joint Authorship (December 3, 1982)

When a piece of writing is jointly authored, it is presumed to be the intellectual product of the authors collectively, not individually, and this fact should govern its further use including its use by any of the original authors. Passages of text and major themes and ideas used in subsequent work by any of the authors should be attributed to the original source following accepted standards for quotation and citation. Exceptions to this practice should occur only if a portion of the jointly authored work has been clearly attributed in the original work to one of the authors.

The second change made by the Committee on Professional Ethics, Rights and Freedoms, was to alter the rule limiting the use of the APSA title by officers or employees of the Association to make clear that the rule pertains to past officers, not merely current officers or employees of the Association. In addition, the committee added a sentence to clarify the rule. The revised Advisory Opinion now reads:

Advisory Opinion No. 10 Use of APSA Title for Political Purposes (Revised, December 3, 1982)

When a past, present or future officer, member, or employee of the Association speaks out on an issue of public policy, endorses a political candidate, or otherwise participates in political affairs, he or she should make it as clear as possible that he or she is not speaking on behalf of the Association unless he or she is so authorized by the Association, and he or she should not encourage any inference that he or she acts for the Association unless so authorized by the Association.

The use of the title of the office held in the APSA in political advertisements, even if labeled "for identification purposes only," may well be seen by others as an endorsement of a political position by the Association and should be avoided.

Rights in Other Countries

In its new role of supporting the rights of political scientists in other countries, the Committee approved action in several of its international cases which entail violation of the rights of political scientists in the Philippines, Ethiopia, and Pakistan. The Committee has written letters of inquiry to appropriate officials in these countries.

In addition, the Committee responded to a request from Allan Sindler that APSA protest the revocation of academic degrees for political purposes in the Soviet Union. The Committee sent the following letter to the General Secretary of the Communist Party Yuri Andropov and other Soviet officials:

Dear Mr. General Secretary:

The American Political Science Association (APSA), founded in 1903, is the national professional organization in the United States which represents the interests of university and college political scientists and others engaged in the study and teaching of government. APSA's Committee on Professional Ethics, Rights and Freedoms is charged with the responsibility of insuring that the

Association News

academic rights of political scientists and other scholars are protected.

It has come to the attention of the committee that the Soviet Union has violated the sanctity of academic degrees which is a fundamental principle of academic freedom. According to reports we have received, the Higher Attestation Commission of the USSR has revoked or is in the process of revoking academic degrees of at least 65 Soviet scholars. The revocation appears to be a reprehensible and wholly unjustifiable procedure for the persecution of scholars, with special application to Jews who have applied to emigrate and to human rights advocates.

This practice by the Commission causes irreparable harm both for the entire world scientific community and for the individual scholars involved. As for the larger scientific community, revocation of academic degrees undercuts the principle of academic freedom which demands that scientists be able to pursue research unfettered by political considerations. Without academic freedom and the independence of scholars which that principle implies, scientific breakthroughs are less likely, research is more likely to be biased and thus reach wrong conclusions, scientists themselves are demoralized, and scientific progress which underpins our whole civilization is undermined. As for the individuals involved, loss of certification can result in gross injustices including demotion, loss of job, cuts in salary, humiliations and ostracism from colleagues, denial of access to scientific libraries and laboratories (and consequent inability to continue research) and even dismissal from any professional employment.

As the new Communist Party leader, you have an historic opportunity to correct a

grave injustice and to advance scientific research by halting the unconscionable practice of revoking academic degrees and by reinstating those degrees which have been so wrongly withdrawn. We urge you to intervene in this matter and remove the enormous impediment imposed by this practice on individual scholars and the scientific community.

We look forward to hearing from you on this most important matter.

Very truly yours,
Nancy Zingale, Chair
Committee on Professional Ethics,
Rights and Freedoms

The Committee invites and urges individual members of APSA to send a similar letter to one or more of these officials to express concern about this practice. The appropriate addresses are:

His Excellency
Anatoliy F. Dobrynin
Ambassador to the USA
1125 16th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036

Georgii Shakhnazarov, President
Soviet Political Science Association
Moscow, Frunze Str. 10
Institute of State and Law
USSR Academy of Sciences
Moscow, USSR

General Secretary of the Central
Committee of the Communist Party
Yuri Andropov
Moscow, Kremlin, USSR

In addition to Zingale, the members of the Committee on Professional Ethics, Rights and Freedoms for 1982 include: Louise Comfort, San Jose State University; Marian Lief Palley, University of Delaware; Allan P. Sindler, University of California, Berkeley; John Wahlke, University of Arizona. □