

# International Political Science

## New Political Science Association Founded in Germany

### Werner Jann\*

Post-Graduate School of  
Administrative Science  
Speyer am Rhein, Germany

The Federal Republic of Germany has had a well established political science association, the *Deutsche Vereinigung für Politische Wissenschaft* (DVPW) for nearly 30 years, so it came as quite a sur-

---

\*Werner Jann is an APSA Congressional Fellow, 1983-84, funded by the German Marshall Fund.



Werner Jann

prise for most members of the profession when a group of mostly conservative professors announced the founding of a new association, the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Politische Wissenschaft* (DGPW) in April 1983. It all started when the last chairman of the old association, Manfred Haettich, resigned from his office and shortly after left the association. In his letter of resignation Haettich complained about some internal personal misgivings, but did not mention any substantial reasons. While all this looked at first like good old German "*Vereinsmeierei*"—splitting up existing associations and founding new ones is a favorite German pastime—it soon became evident that this move reflected serious problems, when a number of esteemed professors followed Haettich and left the old association, shortly after announcing the founding of a new one.

The founding of the new association came as a surprise because it seemed somewhat anachronistic. It is true that the old association had lived through some bitter scientific and political disputes (very often without very clear distinctions between them) and in the late sixties and early seventies a serious split between a radical, sometimes Marxist-oriented wing and a more moderate, partly conservative wing became quite obvious. But in recent years these fights seemed to be battles of the past. The old association had tried to integrate different political and scientific viewpoints, and many observers thought with considerable success. In fact, the election of Haettich as president and a number of other moderate or conservative scientists as council members by the usually liberal majority of the association's members was seen by many political scientists as a clear sign of success of this integration. The breakup was even more surprising,

since discussions in the old council had given no hint of a serious rift within the organization.

So why did some political scientists feel it necessary to found a new association? Critics of the old association had complained for a long time about its unsatisfactory organization and especially about the disappointing attendance rates and scientific results of its biannual meetings. The problems developed, they said, because of the broad membership of the association, where everybody with a university degree in political science can become a member, thus lowering the scientific qualification of the membership. It was alleged by some critics that recent conferences of the association, especially the last one in Berlin in the fall of 1982, did not represent the state of the art of the profession, but were instead characterized by mediocrity, dilettantism, and even a lack of true pluralism of approaches.

As a sign of the low standard and image of the association's meetings, it was stressed that many senior members of the profession had stopped attending the biannual meetings many years ago. But critics of the split-up maintain that most founding members of the new association held office in the old one and were actively involved in the planning and implementation of recent conferences. Furthermore, the complaint about decreasing attendance rates of notable members at the conferences is seen as a good example for the well-known social phenomenon of a self-fulfilling prophecy: if senior members of a profession decide that its meetings are no longer worthwhile to attend, it is small wonder that these meetings no longer represent the state of the art. (How could they, if those who think of themselves as being the most important are not there?)

The old association's policy is to offer a forum for scientific discussions for as broad a spectrum as possible, i.e., also for younger political scientists, who are not yet fully recognized and who may furthermore be outside the mainstream of political science theory or methodology. In contrast, the new association has made it clear that it will pursue a different

objective. In the old association there are now about 900 members, of which more than one-third are full professors and about three-fourths hold a Ph.D. For the new association this membership is far too broad. In general, it will only admit full professors which usually have completed another major piece of research besides their dissertation (the so-called *Habilitation*) and who have contributed considerably to the development of the discipline. Admission to the new association is made even more difficult because as few as five members can block any new member to join.

So by now there are two political associations in Germany. Both held meetings in the fall of 1983 and elected their officials. The old association, the DVPW, is now headed by Hans-Hermann *Hartwich* of Hamburg University, and includes in its membership well-known political science professors like *Ellwein*, *Lehmbruch* and *Scharpf*. The new association, the DGPW, is headed by Ulrich *Matz* of Cologne University and has well-known political scientists like *Wildenmann*, *Kaltefleiter* and *Sontheimer* among its members. It now has about 125 members, and it is understood that probably no more than 200 members will be admitted. It is, of course, impossible to judge which of the two associations is the 'better' one, though it is obvious that the old one is much larger and more influential since it is, among other things, publishing the most important journal of political science in Germany, the *Politische Vierteljahresschrift (PVS)*. Both associations also held scientific conferences this fall and both were highly regarded, lending support to the hope that competition between the two associations would improve the quality of discussions in both of them. There is, however, the danger that both associations will become identified with political labels. Since the new association is more favored by established scientists with moderate or conservative views (its conference stressed the "rediscovery of old truths"), the old association could be identified with more liberal or even radical viewpoints. Membership in one or the other association may then depend more on career considerations than on sci-

tific merits, thus introducing even more opportunism in scientific disputes than already exists.

But hopefully that danger can be overcome. Both conferences tried to attract scientists with conflicting points of view, speakers from both associations appeared at both conferences, and there are now some political scientists who are

members of both associations. One can hope that the split will not continue to grow and lead to protracted infighting among German political scientists because, at least for this observer, the real stuff of politics is still much more interesting than the politics of political science associations.

### **Nominations Sought for APSA Career Awards**

Among the 17 awards presented at the Association's annual meeting are four awards which recognize excellence over an entire career. Members are urged to send suggestions to the committee chairs of these four awards:

#### **Hubert H. Humphrey Award**

Committee Chair: Robert Peabody, Department of Political Science, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD 21218.

This award, first given in 1983, is in recognition of notable public service by a political scientist. Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan was the 1983 winner.

#### **James Madison Award**

Committee Chair: Martin Landau, Department of Political Science, University of California, Berkeley, Berkeley, CA 94720.

This award, given triennially, is to an American political scientist who has made a distinguished scholarly contribution to political science. Previous winners are Robert A. Dahl, Yale University (1978) and Gabriel A. Almond, Stanford University (1981).

#### **Carey McWilliams Award**

Committee Chair: Thomas Patterson, Department of Political Science, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY 13210.

This award, first given in 1982, is to honor a major journalistic contribution to our understanding of politics. Previous winners are Richard Strout, *Christian Science Monitor*, and David S. Broder, *Washington Post*.

#### **Charles E. Merriam Award**

Committee Chair: Jack W. Peltason, President, American Council on Education, One Dupont Circle, Washington, DC 20036.

This award, first given in 1975, is to honor a person whose published work and career represents a significant contribution to the art of government through the application of social science research. Previous winners are Aaron Wildavsky, University of California, Berkeley; Alice M. Rivlin, Congressional Budget Office; James Q. Wilson, Harvard University; Don K. Price, Harvard University; E. Pendleton Herring; Evron M. Kirkpatrick, American Political Science Association; Harold F. Gosnell, University of Chicago; Richard E. Neustadt, Harvard University; Jack W. Peltason, American Council on Education.