

Communications

Letters to the Editor

To the Editor:

I would like to offer some reactions to the Report of the APSA Academic Freedom Committee on my dispute with the University of Maryland (*PS*, Fall 1979).

First, as to procedure: at the start of the Report, the Committee states that it interviewed a great many individuals involved in the case. Unfortunately, I am not included in that number. It is true that Prof. McClesky, the Chairperson of the Committee, wrote to me on May 25, 1979 and asked if I wished to comment on the AAUP Report on my case which had just been released. I did not wish to comment at that time and simply waited for another communication, which I was certain was coming, inviting me to appear before the Committee. None came, and I was rather surprised when I learned that the investigation had been concluded—an investigation that involved many interviews—without interviewing the party principally concerned.

What might I have contributed that was new or different? Well, judging from the Committee's final report, the following observations may have been of some use:

What is chiefly at issue in my case is why the University of Maryland departed from its own procedures, procedures traditionally followed in appointing professors and departmental heads in that university, and not those ideally favored by the AAUP. As much as we may deplore this fact, the latter were never followed. But the general condition of the university is not the problem. Of concern here is the break with established patterns, a break that everyone admits, and why it occurred. Would there have been such a break if I were not a Marxist? The emphasis that the Report gives to the AAUP ideal and the ways in which the procedures by which I was hired failed to live up to this ideal is simply irrelevant when it is not positively misleading.

One of the main departures from the procedures then existing at the University of Maryland is the long delay and inaction on the part of President Elkins. If, as the Report suggests, he was influenced in not acting by political considerations, then it seems clear that I was denied the position because of political considerations—no matter what his successor, President Toll, thought or did subsequently. I had already begun legal action against the University before Toll officially rejected me on the grounds that the unprecedented delay constituted a rejection.

But President Toll does not come away with a clean bill of health either. Though he may not have said that he was rejecting me for political reasons, some of his actions would certainly incline one to think as much. Among those which were not mentioned in the APSA Report are his refusal to interview me despite repeated requests from me and others in his own administration that he do so (Elkins too refused to interview me). If he were really concerned to see if I possessed the qualities required of a chairperson, doesn't an interview seem to be in order? Provost Polakoff and Chancellor Gluckstern certainly thought so; they interviewed me several times before they made me the offer.

Furthermore, Toll's insistence in his "rejection speech" that there were considerable pressures on him to appoint me without even mentioning that there were pressures on him to reject me is, at the least, highly suspect. Equally suspect are the closed meetings he had with Regents who were quoted in the press as opposing my appointment because of my Marxist views. What was discussed at these meetings—football?

It is certainly true that not all the facts are in. But, as the AAUP recognized in censuring the University of Maryland, it is often possible to make a reasoned judgment on the basis of facts which are available, especially when the facts are as one-sided as they are in this case. To do otherwise is to forego whatever political and moral influence one can exert while a case unfolds. To withhold judgment, to strive after some abstract ideal of balance in a case such as mine is to make an unbalanced judgment on behalf of a university administration that requires nothing more than such "understanding" from the academic community in order to continue on its wayward path. To leave the issues completely up to the courts to decide in a case which may go on for years is to reject a significant opportunity to effect the state of academic freedom not only in Maryland but throughout America. If I had been given a chance to speak to the Committee these are some of the points I would have made. Would this have affected the outcome? We will never know.

Bertell Ollman
New York University

To the Editor:

I regret that Professor Ollman is dissatisfied with the report of the APSA Committee on Professional Ethics and Academic Freedom on his non-appointment at the University of Maryland at College Park, a report prepared while I was still serving as chairman of that committee.

As Professor Ollman acknowledges in his letter above, I did write him on May 25, 1979 to inform him of the committee meeting on June 4. I specifically invited him to comment on the report of the investigating team of AAUP's Committee A, and I closed with a more general invitation ("I have had extensive conversations with a range of individuals involved in this matter and will welcome any comments by you as well"). I suggested that he either write or call me, and included my telephone number. I heard nothing from him.

One of Professor Ollman's two substantive criticisms of the report is that the committee should not have examined the Maryland selection process, despite the fact that it flagrantly violated the procedures endorsed by the AAUP. I can readily understand that Professor Ollman thinks that the process by which he was nominated was a sound one, but I doubt that most scholars would agree, and indeed, the procedure at Maryland has since been changed to bring it more into line with AAUP principles and with the practice at most universities.

Professor Ollman's other substantive criticism of the committee's work is that it failed to convict President Toll of rejecting his appointment on improper grounds. Understandably, Professor Ollman wishes to have the committee exert "political and moral influence" while the case is pending, but the committee—and the AAUP investigating team and AAUP's Committee A—concluded that there was not enough evidence of improper motivation to warrant such a conviction. In the final analysis, I suppose it boils down to the question of whether evidence should precede conviction, or vice-versa. Presumably, Professor Ollman's lawsuit (which, incidentally, precluded our getting any information from President Toll and the Maryland Board of Regents) will eventually bring out the relevant evidence. Until then, I believe the committee report says about all that can fairly and responsibly be said.

Clifton McCleskey
University of Virginia and
Former Chairperson
APSA Committee on Professional Ethics
and Academic Freedom

To the Editor:

It is ironic that an organization whose *raison d'être* is the study of politics would fail to notice the politics of its own assembly as an organization. In this respect, "ironic" is perhaps the kindest adjective that could be applied to John E. Trent's Report on the 1979 Moscow World Congress of the International Political Science Association (*PS*, Vol. 13, Winter 1980, pp. 80-88). As someone who attended the IPSA World Congress in Moscow, I would like to offer the observation that our Soviet hosts were concerned with more than simply promoting "peace" and "mutual understanding"; namely, they seemed quite attentive to their own purposes of (a) legitimating Soviet social science, and (b) containing views critical of the Soviet system.

As to the first of these desiderata, the Congress, the event itself, had for domestic consumption a considerable legitimization value. Quite like the Moscow Olympics (but, of course, on a much smaller scale), the Congress was a way of saying: "We are just like anybody else. They have social science; we have social science. More, ours is particularly well developed; that is why the International Political Science Association chose our site for its World Congress." This aspect of the Congress, its very being it might be said, was played up in the Soviet mass media, particularly over television. Ceremonies as well as meetings between Congress participants and Soviet officials received extensive video coverage, complemented by suitable voice-overs. *Pravda* (August 18, 1979) devoted a lengthy article to the proceedings, portraying a Soviet paper on Lenin as a political theorist as the highlight of the whole event, a paper which, *Pravda* emphasized, elicited panegyrics from all corners of the globe. The tactic of maintaining a *cordin sanitaire* between Congress and society had implications for the foreign guests as well. These the Soviet organizing committee wined and dined in familiar style. Most participants, not speaking Russian, were probably unaware that the meals they were taking or the beer they were buying (Czechoslovakian Pilsner) *in the student dining hall* at Moscow State University were unavailable to the students themselves (security people kept the students out at the appointed hours). What was available to the students once their turn came bore no resemblance to what had been consumed by the Congress participants. Equally unpleasant were the circumstances surrounding (literally) the banquet for the closing ceremonies. I happened to be on one of the buses commissioned to take participants from Moscow State University to the restaurant Arbat in the center of Moscow. Traffic was stopped for our motorcade. Participants stepped off their buses into the bright evening sunshine and into the waiting banquet. Having a matter to attend myself, I left the bus and walked down the street in the opposite direction. Returning a half hour later, I discovered that the scene at the restaurant had changed substantially. Inside, the participants and the banquet, on the restaurant door a sign "Closed for repairs," and the restaurant, ringed by police who were keeping back a crowd of perhaps 500 Moscovites who had assembled to see what was going on.

Regarding the second point, containing criticism, a section of panels organized around "the theory of the state" merits a word. Most of the papers for these panels were given by Marxists. Hence, they presented something of a problem for the Soviets who would much prefer to defend their version of reality against "bourgeois falsifiers" than against Marxists. Although none of the papers in question dealt with the Soviet Union *per se*, although all of the papers were delivered at the appropriate place and time for distribution, to my knowledge not a single one was made available by the Soviets at the distribution tables which they manned. Having checked eight times myself over a period of four days, and having spoken

with perhaps a dozen other participants who had no better luck in getting a copy of any of these, I am led to the conclusion that all of the papers were confiscated by the Soviets. This conclusion is reinforced by the veritable offensive waged by Soviet academics against the panels themselves. On two occasions, the rooms in which the panels convened were packed by Soviets and Bulgarians (I use the word "packed" because these delegations (a) were composed of many people who spoke neither English nor French and (b) occupied more than half of the available seats). After the customary presentation of papers and remarks from designated discussants, the meeting would be opened to comments from the floor, following a procedure of recognizing the first person to have sent his name on a folded piece of paper to the panel's chairperson. In each of these cases, a Soviet academic sent her name forward literally before the first presentation was begun. As the first to be recognized, she would hold the floor for half an hour or more, reading from a prepared text on "real socialism" and "authentic Marxism-Leninism." The Soviets and Bulgarians would pull out their pens and appear to be taking notes at a furious pace. A glance over their shoulders, however, revealed the note-taking to be yet another act—they were merely doodling. The third panel in this section found the Soviets and Bulgarians absent; they had massed against some papers on human rights being given in another room. So, some East German comrades took their place and followed the same plan of "first recognition, then hold the floor."

May I add that this account was written with the intention of slandering neither the Soviet state nor IPSA. Rather, my purpose was to promote a little truth in advertising, a little politics in political science.

Michael E. Urban
SUNY-Cswego

To the Editor:

I am writing to draw the attention of political scientists to a very important development in regard to regulation on use of human subjects. For some time it has been widely believed that HEW requires IRB review of all research using human subjects conducted by an institution receiving HEW funds, whether or not the particular research was funded by HEW.

That erroneous view has not been explicitly denied by HEW. On January 24, 1980, Joan Z. Bernstein, General Counsel of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, in a letter to the *New York Times*, provided a most significant official interpretation of HEW human subject rules. Ms. Bernstein explains that the present rules apply only to HEW funded research. I quote:

"The current policy applies only to research involving human subjects which is conducted or supported by H.E.W. The purpose of the policy is to assure that, at least for research funded by H.E.W., the rights and welfare of subjects are adequately protected."

Ms. Bernstein goes on to say that under the new proposed rules, when, and if they ever come into effect, that would no longer be true. But for the present, no university is obliged by HEW to subject non-HEW research to IRB review. Research institutions are free to act as they deem proper.

This important official interpretation by the General Counsel of HEW should be drawn to the attention of all IRBs, university administrations, and affected faculty members. Many universities have adopted procedures under the misapprehension that they were obliged to do so by HEW regulations. Now that that error has been corrected, they may choose to revise their practices.

In particular, those political scientists who believe that prior review of interview or documentary research violates the First Amendment, now need only address themselves to assuring that the future rules do not contain any such clauses. There are no present regulations requiring them to submit to such review.

Ithiel De Sola Pool
Massachusetts Institute of Technology

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