

Communications

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To the Editor:

I would like to reassure Professor Alfred Diamant and every student of comparative politics (including myself) that I am not "out to 'get' comparative politics" nor did I mean to report the "imminent demise" of this subdiscipline, when I—in what was meant to be a passing remark—stated that there was a "marked decline" in terms of *clear trend* in category VII from 1971 to 1974. So far as "statistical honesty" goes—and even as a non-statistician, or at best Sunday-statistician, I will venture to say this—the subtle observer must have noticed that Professor Diamant neglected to mention either of the above restrictive qualifications nor, indeed, does his suggested counter-evidence concerning percentage points and category IV (U.S. State and Local Government) stand the test against either of them. Also, so far as "statistical honesty" is concerned, how can one justify picking out (in what must appear to be arbitrary) the years 1970 and 1974 instead of the "highs" and "lows" of the period from 1970 to 1974 in computing a trend of change in the subdisciplines? If the latter method of comparison is applied, the decline in both categories, IV and VII, would equally be -28% (while still only the latter of the two would appear to represent a clear trend).

Now, it is one thing to try to defend my scholastic integrity, but, I must admit, I am infinitely harder pressed to prove my loyalty and unwavering devotion to the subdiscipline of comparative politics. How can I possibly prove that I am not an "enemy" (not to speak of a "real" one) of comparative politics in the light of having "singled out" this discipline and having drawn academia's attention to its alleged marked decline (as a *trend* during the period of 1971 to 1974)? Does not all the available evidence suggest evil designs? After all, did not my "singling out" trigger Professor Diamant's singling out of my remark and his devotion of a whole article to this *corpus delicti*, and did not this in turn give me an excuse for the present rebuttal, the cumulative effect of which is to draw even more attention to the alleged decline (marked, numerical, percentage-wise, or other) of comparative politics? Am I not really guilty of conspiracy, to which I have made Professor Diamant an unwitting accomplice? Clearly, it boggles the mind to think through all the potential ramifications, moral or otherwise, that may constitute evil intentions. Perhaps only Mark Twain, who also said: "Get your facts first, and then you can distort 'em as

much as you please," could find a way out of this tangle. So let me just try to defuse some of the existing and potential allegations by merely stating that I am deeply honored by an article-length criticism by an admired scholar (after all, my last article in *PS* triggered only a "letter to the editor").

Peter J. Sackman
University of California, Berkeley

To the Editor:

I would appreciate the publication of the attached letter in the next issue of *PS*.

Inez Smith Reid
Barnard College

Professor Alan Sindler
Department of Political Science
University of California, Berkeley
Berkeley, California

Dear Professor Sindler:

Many letters come across my desk in the course of a week. Many are routine, some are excitingly pleasant, and a few arouse pain in a normally quiescent nerve. Your letter in behalf of the Ad Hoc Committee fell into the latter category.

I am accustomed to the heat of political battle since I have been involved personally in some striking and breathtaking political events. I am not and shall never be accustomed, however, to the viciousness and unfairness of an approach to political battle. I must say that I was appalled by the attack on the Caucus for a New Political Science. As an attorney and as a political scientist I can only deplore any innuendos, the play on fear, and the inaccuracies contained in that letter.

Unhappily the timing of the letter made it impossible for me to withdraw my consent to the support of the Ad Hoc Committee in my search for a seat on the APSA Council. It is not too late, however, to disassociate myself totally from the attitudes contained in your letter. If that is what endorsement by the Ad Hoc Committee means, I must do more than shake my head in disbelief. I can and will disassociate myself from your unbelievably vicious letter. It violates every sense of fair play and every notion of decency to which I adhere.

Sincerely,
Inez Smith Reid
Acting Chairperson
Department of Political Science
Barnard College

To the Editor:

This week I received a letter in the mail, signed by Allan P. Sindler, Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee for a Representative Slate. The letter's purpose was to encourage members of the APSA to vote for their slate of nominees, in particular for Samuel H. Beer.

The letter contains a certain amount of innuendo. For example, it is asserted the majority of Association members oppose the Caucus for New Political Science, even though they have not made their opinion known by voting. It is suggested New Caucus members who were elected last time around have obstructed the APSA Council to the point it was unable to act. No proof is offered for either statement.

The letter also suggests to elect New Caucus candidates will result in politicized APSA. It fails to consider that a stand against involvement in the "political arena" outside the APSA is just as politicized a stance as one to the contrary. Furthermore, the letter itself is as politicized a document as any I ever have seen.

Finally, I am left wondering at the Ad Hoc Committee's access to the APSA mailing list. I do not know what our policy is in this regard. Is the list for sale? Is it available *gratis*? Was it offered to the New Caucus as well? Does the New Caucus have it already? While I am not overly enthusiastic about my address being handed out by virtue of my having paid dues to the APSA, if it must be hawked, then best it be done fairly. I am not a member of the New Caucus, any more than I am of the Ad Hoc Committee. I am, however, a Political Scientist who is left a little amazed at a political group which lobbies against politicization.

Sarah Slavin Schramm
George Washington University

Editor's Note: Under the rules governing the conduct of the APSA Annual Business Meeting and Elections, which are approved by the Council and printed in *PS*, "mailing address labels of the APSA may be purchased at cost from the Association by any nominating group." (see *PS*, Summer 1975, p. 304, rule 4.14.) Over the past several years, a number of groups, the Ad Hoc Committee, the Caucus for a New Political Science and the Women's

Caucus for Political Science have purchased the APSA mailing list.

To the Editor:

I would like to call attention to the opening passage in Allan P. Sindler's "Dear Colleague" letter to APSA members (October 13, 1975) on behalf of the Ad Hoc Committee for a Representative Slate. Without debating either the dubious nature of the title assumed by this committee or the merits of its narrow and peculiar definition of professional orthodoxy, I will turn directly to the point of my letter. The Sindler letter begins, tongue in cheek one would hope: "From its inception our committee has fought for one thing: to keep the American Political Science Association dedicated to its historic mission of *nonpolitical* . . . service to *all* political scientists. . ." (emphasis on nonpolitical mine.) Regretfully, the near hysterical tone of the remainder of the letter makes it difficult to pass off Sindler's unfortunate, but revealing, choice of words simply as an unsuccessful attempt at humor. Though Sindler's letter primarily constitutes a shrill, humorless attack on the CNPS and its candidates, it does ironically commend the Caucus for its "candor" in calling itself "the Caucus for a *New* Political Science." If candor is to be applauded, I propose that those who share the Ad Hoc group's obvious distaste for politics consider referring to themselves in the future as nonpolitical scientists. Taking candor one step further, we might all, considering the questionable nature of our discipline's claim to being scientific, begin calling ourselves nonpolitical nonscientists. If this idea caught on, perhaps we could change the name of the national association to the American Nonpolitical Non-science Association. This step should eliminate, at least for those willing to labor intellectually under the comfortable, if awkward, banner of nonpolitical nonscience, practically every ideological and methodological cause for troublesome contention (i.e., if the Ad Hoc group will forgive the crude terminology, politics).

J. D. Phaup
Texas A&I University