

International Political Science

Ethics Committee Sets Human Rights Role for APSA

At its June 25 meeting, APSA's Committee on Professional Ethics, Rights and Freedoms responded to the Council's call to help protect the human rights of scholars in other countries.

As chair of the committee, Nancy Zingale of the College of St. Thomas, reviewed the Council's charge to the committee that it is to reflect "the increased concern and attention to human rights matters" in the Association and that it "formally accept matters relating to political science and human rights." The committee received the staff report on the roundtable, "The Rights of Political Scientists in Other Countries: APSA's Role," which was held at the Midwest Political Science Association meeting on April 30, and used that report to develop a set of procedures to take up international cases.

The key problem facing the committee, according to Zingale, is the inapplicability for international cases of the committee's current procedures which have been used for domestic cases. The usual procedure includes the following elements: an aggrieved party, usually a political scientist, submits in writing a grievance. If the committee agrees that the case raises a significant ethical, procedural or professional question, a special representative will be assigned by the committee to gather facts on the case, try to mediate among the parties in disagreement, and issue a confidential report to the committee.

If the case has not been mediated successfully, the committee will make a determination as to the facts and as to what should be done by relevant parties to rectify the situation. Finally, if the particular

case in point raises a more general question of professional ethics, rights or freedoms, the committee may decide to write an Advisory Opinion which does not refer to parties in a particular case but which states a general principal and sets standards for the profession in general.

The committee has issued 18 Advisory Opinions since 1969 on such matters as the procedural rights of graduate students, plagiarism, fraud in claiming advanced degrees, permission to reprint and multiple submission of manuscripts. (The full list of Advisory Opinions and a complete explanation of the committee's procedures can be found in *PS*, winter 1982, pp. 140-148.)

Difficulties

These procedures were found by the committee to be impractical in international cases. Frequently, it is impossible for the aggrieved party, who may, for example, have been arrested and detained, personally to make the complaint.

There is also the difficulty of obtaining accurate information on international cases. Furthermore, the resources of the committee are too limited to review cases in the manner described above. Other practical problems were also considered by the committee, such as what constitutes a political scientist.

The key decision made by the committee to circumvent some of these problems was to work as closely as possible with the *Clearinghouse on Science and Human Rights* of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). APSA already has a cooperative, working relationship with the Clearinghouse and with the project director, Eric Stover, who participated in the Midwest panel.

New Procedures

The draft language for the procedures established by the Committee on Professional Ethics, Rights and Freedoms is as follows:

1. The committee will become involved in varying degrees in cases which are brought up by a reputable third-party information source. All such cases, however, will first be cross-checked through the Clearinghouse on Science and Human Rights of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. The fact that all requests for consideration or assistance are first cross-checked with the Clearinghouse will be made known to anyone making such requests. Because the committee lacks the resource base to investigate and act on cases autonomously, the committee will rely as much as possible on the Clearinghouse in deciding which cases to act on and in obtaining information about those cases.

2. Ordinarily, the committee will respond to cases involving scholars whose fields correspond to those subsumed in the U.S. under the phrase "political science." However, because certain cases, which may not involve political scientists specifically, may have broad implications for all political and social scientists and because the Association wishes to develop a cooperative relationship with and to assist other disciplines where possible, the committee will take up a few cases which seem most serious to the committee but which may not directly involve political scientists. (The committee established a limit of six cases of this sort.)

3. The committee will take up cases which seem to the committee to be egregious enough to merit the committee's attention, given the limited time and resources of the committee. The committee will use the International Declaration of Human Rights and the two accompanying covenants as a basic standard of human rights and as a basis to determine what constitutes a violation of those rights.

4. The committee's procedure will be to write a letter of inquiry to the appropriate authorities and to follow up that letter

with subsequent letters. Other actions such as visits to embassies and site visits would be considered at the appropriate time.

IPSA

The committee also discussed the role of the Association and its representatives in the upcoming meeting of the International Political Science Association (IPSA) in Brazil. The members of the committee agreed that "it makes little sense to take on individual human rights cases, if at the highest level of the Association human rights are not actively supported," one committee member said.

Consequently, the committee has requested APSA's representatives to the IPSA World Congress (Seymour Martin Lipset, Philip Converse, and Thomas Mann) to support actively the Association's commitment on human rights at the IPSA meeting in Rio de Janeiro, August 9-14.

In addition to Zingale and Sindler, other members of the committee are: Louise Comfort of San Jose State University, Marian Palley of the University of Delaware, Allan Sindler of the University of California at Berkeley, and John Wahlke of the University of Arizona. Association members with comments on this matter may write the committee in care of the national office.

Australian Survey Planned, Questions Welcome

A major social and political survey of the Australian population is to be conducted this year by researchers at the Australian National University and the University of Melbourne. The main aim of this study is to collect timely, high quality social and political data based on a large, representative national sample. The study will also investigate several specific questions concerning public satisfaction and dissatisfaction with government and the effects of family background, ethnicity, and gender on inequality and political attitudes and behavior.