Political Science and Political Regeneration

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There was a time not too long past when some smart alecks in our own University disparaged political science as "political *sayang*" (meaning useless, a waste), and campus philosophers who pretended to universal knowledge denied it the status of a science. We, who had chosen to devote our lives to scholarship in the field, kept our counsel and our sense of humor.

The World Wars, the cold war, and a number of brushfire wars among other international phenomena aroused new interest in political studies, such as those concerning war and its causes, the pacific settlement of disputes, security arrangements, international organizations, the dynamics of decision-making, comparative governments and ideologies, alternative political forms relevant to new needs, regional cooperation, and many other subjects which today constitute the stuff of politics.

In response to the new challenges, the political science discipline has had to sharpen its tools, even retool. It reassessed the traditional approaches to the study of political structures and events, revitalized these approaches through keener analysis, and blazed trails along behavioral paths. No longer would institutional, historical, and legal approaches be adequate. No longer would it be enough for students to memorize the provisions of constitutions and organic statutes; not enough to recite political history and brief legal cases; not enough to enumerate political parties and outline their history and platforms. While it still helped to know basic facts, facts as such left unrelated to one another merely cluttered the storehouse of memory. A tractable theoretical framework could weave relevant facts together for a more systematic understanding of the complex interrelationships between political forms, functions, and forces

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involved in a dynamic struggle to influence or to determine political decisions. Thus, a new, more dynamic empiricism was in order. No matter how thorough, description did not suffice. Beyond description lay explanation, theory building, and prediction in human affairs.

World developments had imposed tremendous demands upon political science as a discipline, along with economics, sociology, psychology, and other social sciences. Progress in behavioral studies and a new emphasis on the *science* part of social science methodology required the upgrading of standards of scholarship in these disciplines. This was a welcome development for the social sciences, since the natural sciences with their long headstart, their numerous dedicated scientists, and their huge budgets for research had all but run away with our world (having taken men to the moon and back), while the social sciences still have to unravel the perplexities of human relations, have yet to discover effective solutions to the recurring problems of the human condition.

It has of course been more difficult to deal with man and his institutions than to experiment with objects of nature. Nonetheless, the call to political science seems clear. It must lend its insights to as many people as possible, but particularly to those who would lead men and nations. For instance, that much neglected branch of political science, political theory, might teach types of rulership and come up with rulership that is no absolute prerogative, political office that is not vested property (personal or conjugal) but a public trust; democratic government as one of, by, and for the people; republican government as representative and responsible, being based on consent. It would teach of pure and corrupt forms of government.

It may be a good question to ask how much political theory our politicians and other leaders actually know. Pre-World War II curricula for the pre-law course required only three political science subjects: Philippine government, American government, and Far Eastern government. Since the bulk of our political leaders are lawyers of pre-World War II vintage, unless they are widely read on the philosophy of politics among other cultural subjects, it is highly probable that the political leadership in our country may be wanting or lacking in the basic insights necessary for wise statesmanship. Indeed, far too many of our politicians consider Machiavelli's *The Prince* as a personal bible for successful statecraft, or for success in politics, little understanding the historical perspective and context in which it was written. An undergraduate course in political thought

would teach among other thinkers about St. Augustine, one of the earliest Church Fathers, who wrote that without justice the state is no more than a band of robbers. It would treat of the ecclesiastical controversy between church and state, and recall to those who disdain the Christian influence in politics the old struggle for liberty against tyrants first initiated by the Church in defense of the right of worship and the freedom of conscience against state infringement.

A study of political philosophy might enable one to see beyond the daily reported facts of the ideological struggle and appreciate Dean Inge's observation that we are "living on Christian capital," that if the state has not completely taken over the individual's soul everywhere today, it is because the Christian spirit persists and has ever contested the state's encroachment into the private realm of the human mind and spirit. Alexander Solzhenitsyn's Lenten letter to the Patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church bespeaks of the deprivation and improverishment of the spirit that can be wrought by an atheistic state upon a materially sufficient people.[1] Worthy of note in this regard is how Solzhenitsyn heaps his caveats solely upon the Church: he chides the Russian Church for its capitulation to the Russian State at the expense of the spiritual welfare of its flock, but scarcely faults the State for the totalitarian pre-emption of all individual identity and allegiance.

Those among us who despair of our system, our socioeconomic political system, have a lot to learn about freedom. Well-taught courses in political theory might render us aware of the perils of rashness and the forfeiture of freedom in some alternative systems that promise material security.

No one would say that we have the best working democracy in the Philippines today. No one would argue against the need for improving our institutions – political, economic, and social. The Chief of State declares that our society is sick. Our nation is rent with discontent and dissension. We have perennial problems of subsistence and education for a teeming, ever increasing population. We have peace and order problems. There is a phenomenon of Philippine Statehood, U.S.A., which some regard as the ultimate in colonialism, self-debasement, and anti-Filipinism, but which may be a symptom of even graver ailments. In the very halls of the body we have convoked to remedy the ills that beset our country and to establish the foundations for a just society, hangs a cloud of

[1]See The Sunday Australian, April 23, 1972, p. 7.

suspicion: who is tainted and who is not tainted? How can the shaken faith of the people in constituted government be restored? How, when the time comes, can our people accept and ratify a document that they suspect has been bought, made to order by interested parties, parties interested not necessarily in the national welfare?

These are questions to which all Filipinos may have to address themselves soon. They concern the national interest as well as the particular interest of all citizens of the Republic of the Philippines and all members of the Filipino nation. Our survival as a political entity may well depend upon the answers we give to these questions.

Some may demur and say that these are political questions, so let the political experts answer them, let the political scientists tackle the problem. There seems to be such an aversion to politics as it has developed in this country that the very mention of the term *politics* and its derivatives (like *politician, politicalization,* even *political scientist, etc.*) conjures ugly images of graft and corruption, treason, bribery, and other high crimes. Let us not think, however, that by turning apolitical, or by simply turning away, we can make our political and other problems go away. It is precisely in understanding politics — its theory and practice, its methods and techniques, and the manner in which political action may be directed towards the highest goals of human endeavor — that we may move up and out of our nation's present predicament.

Evidently, one cannot overstate the country's need, particularly among its leaders, for a substantial background in political philosophy and political science. While the latter is descriptive, the former is prescriptive. Political scientists cannot pretend that science bars them from value preferences. If those who know will not tell, then who will tell? If our politics is to improve, its practitioners, the politicians, must have recourse not merely to a day-to-day pragmatic approach. Politicians who would be statesmen must first be knowledgeable in theory if they are in practice to apply sound philosophical and moral criteria for public decisions. Ultimately, no man and no nation can escape moral judgment for his or its acts. Despite their Machiavellian divorce several centuries ago, a reconciliation between politics and ethics is probably what is needed today. Political power must be used for good, the good of most if not of all, or it would be no more than brute strength or tyranny.

The Department of Political Science of the University of the Philippines has been cognizant of the responsibilities of the

discipline towards building a better society for the nation and for the world. It recognizes a *summum bonum* towards which all human efforts must be directed: the classical ideal of a good life for all – one of material sufficiency as well as spiritual fulfillment, a life of quality, of peace and happiness. The good life has been for too long a dream when the natural world is beautiful and bountiful, and can be harnessed to sustain man in his legitimate pursuits, as well as ordered to promote his utmost well-being.

No one need go hungry or wander in the streets roofless and rootless. There should be enough for everyone, provided that greed is bridled, and the distribution of nature's bounties and man's rewards is equitable and just. It is the task of the political system, whatever its form (unitary or federal, presidential or parliamentary, centralized or decentralized) or legislative structure (unicameral or bicameral), and whatever its ideology (democratic, socialistic, or communistic), to determine the interests of the people it serves and protect and promote these interests. It is generally known that we in the University of the Philippines, Department of Political Science, belong to various shades of the ideological spectrum, and that while we may have different notions of the means by which to bring progress to society and happiness to the individual (not necessarily in that order; priorities vary), we are all agreed that the good life on earth is within human reach and must be made available to all as soon as possible. To dally in the midst of a deepening misery among our people would be to play with a "social volcano."

For our part, the Department of Political Science has tried to make itself useful nationally. Members of our department have participated in various national undertakings and community projects. We serve as lecturers at the National Defense College of our Republic at Fort Bonifacio, the Air Force Command, as well as with the UP Extension at Clark Air Force Base. We have served as consultants and resource persons in the various committees of the Constitutional Convention. We worked as consultants in the recent performance audit of our House of Representatives. We have taken part in committee hearings and written position papers and reports for executive and legislative bodies e.g., the Senate Committee on Education's Research Council on Higher Education. We helped the Department of Foreign Affairs set up an in-service training program, and have for years assisted it in the preparation of foreign service examinations; we are in the process of revising the foreign service curriculum drastically to meet national needs. We have accepted

numerous invitations to speak before various professional and civic groups. We participated in radio and TV programs like *Sandigan, Pulong Bayan,* and *Elections 69 and 70.* We attended national and international conferences and seminars on political, social, economic, legal and related subjects, although we have been limited by fund scarcity to attending such conferences only if these are held in the Philippines. We have published some books, monographs, articles and letters in learned as well as in popular publications. We contributed the Philippine entry in *The World and Asia,* an Australian encyclopedia covering this region. We have counselled students and helped them get jobs and/or scholarships.

Political science training is now better recognized and appreciated in the Philippines. Doctors and masters of political science are in demand as advisers and career officials in government and international agencies. One of our earliest secretaries of Foreign Affairs was a doctor of political science. The highest ranking Filipina in the UN until she retired was a doctor of political science. The highest ranking Filipino now in the UN is a political science major, besides being a lawyer and technocrat. The lady ambassador to Israel is a doctor of political science. A former Education Secretary, now President of the Fund for Assistance to Private Education, is a doctor of political science. The Secretary of the Constitutional Convention is a doctor of political science. Two of the most knowledgeable and respectable delegates to the Convention are doctors of political science. The Executive Secretary of the Government Reorganization Commission is a doctor of political science. The three vice-presidents of the University of the Philippines are all doctors of political science. There are at present seven doctors of political science in our department with two more due from abroad, but these are not nearly enough to fill the demands of teaching and research as well as the consultancies that call upon expertise in many areas of this field.

Political science is broad and affords many possibilities for service to the country and its people. No national planning committee would be complete without a political science representative. Efforts at international cooperation in the various specialized agencies and other multinational groups have much to profit from a knowledge of political science. The Constitutional Convention itself could use more political science, not just through a few committee hearings and a spate of position papers, but in the actual formulation of the draft of the Constitution itself. It is my opinion that too many delegates have been playing by ear all along, and it is

my fear that this ear has not been too keen. A core committee of political scientists together with some economists, sociologists, environmentalists, and lawyers might be able to draft a good constitution for the country in less time than it has taken to organize the Convention at a fraction of the cost to call one, and such a draft might have a greater probability of acceptance by our people.

Our Department has been busy at the grindstone both outside and inside academe. In 1969-70 it serviced 1,013 A.B. majors and 523 Foreign Service students for a total of 1,536 undergraduates, plus 72 graduate students for a grand total of 1,608 students. These figures dipped somewhat in 1970-71 to 710 A.B. majors and 358 Foreign Service students for a total of 1,068 undergraduates, and 84 graduate students (increase of 12) for a grand total of 1,152 political science upperclassmen. These figures do not include freshmen and sophomores, whose general education requirements appropriated a total of 52 sections in 1969-70 and 58 sections in 1970-71 in Western Thought II alone; thus, a total of 2,406 and 2,529 students of Western Thought II were serviced respectively in the years cited, at an average of 46 and 44 students per class respectively. These, when added to political science courses, made the total number of classes taught by our Department in 1969-70 reach 171. This number decreased somewhat in 1970-71 to 168 classes. Thus, our Department served a grand total of 5,968 and 5,767 students respectively during the two years under review. These numbers represent 94 per cent and 90 per cent of the total enrolment in the College of Arts and Sciences at the time. In 1969-70, there were 86 graduates of A.B. Political Science and 59 graduates of B.S. Foreign Service, degree courses administered by our Department. In 1970-71 there were 81 graduates of Political Science and 34 graduates of B.S. Foreign Service. These figures represent 29 per cent and 24 per cent respectively of the total number of graduates in this College for those years.

Still we feel that the Department of Political Science could do even better. It could do more than routinely continuing to teach batches of students year after year. It could upgrade standards of teaching and learning. It could reexamine the content of our curricular offerings with a view to update, streamline, and integrate teaching materials. It might combine suitable lecture classes (e.g., Social and Political Thought, Introduction to Political Science, Philippine Government, Comparative Government, etc.) under a senior lecturer-professor assisted by junior lecturers-instructors for

smaller panel discussions, so that savings on faculty time may be applied to professional improvement, community service, and possibly textbook writing. The quality of big lectures is expectedly superior to that of smaller ones. The dearth of local textbooks has been a long-standing problem in Philippine education at all levels, which might be alleviated by clear-cut policies encouraging their writing and publication by those best qualified.

The University of the Philippines faculty bears a unique responsibility for leadership in scholarship in this country. A reasonable teaching load, research and sabbatical leaves, as well as material and academic recognition of scholarly work, may be among the incentives toward a proper discharge of this responsibility.

Basic to the upgrading of academic standards is the improvement of faculty qualifications and faculty outlook. The University itself should launch a full-scale faculty development program that would encourage research and study for higher academic degrees and scholarly publication. Faculty development would be enhanced by a reduction of the present normal teaching load of 15 hours a week to a maximum of 12, allowing further reductions for research, formal enrolment towards a higher degree, administrative or other special assignments, and/or community service.

Furthermore, the University could improve the physical facilities and the general atmosphere for research and study, perhaps set up a political science library in one of the huge, vacant halls of the Faculty Center that have been for three years now mostly dead space, or the space might be shared by all the disciplines housed in the Faculty Center through an interdisciplinary library. The Administration might try fund-shopping for fellowships, scholarships, lectureships, professorial chairs, exchange professorships, and other endowments to stimulate academic achievement. The Department might try to tap College funds to be able to publish a journal of political science to which both faculty and graduate students could contribute regularly and in more permanent form than popular publications.

Other development incentives would include a realistic salary schedule for both teaching and nonteaching staff, together with equitable recruitment and promotion policies. The faculty ought not to have to teach overloads for extra remunerations, "to make both ends meet." Honoraria for summer and overload teaching, if unavoidable in the exigencies of the service, must likewise be more justly paid. Clearly, promotions must be based on merit and should be fairly frequent and regular. The number of steps between ranks

ought to be reduced to no more than three, except possibly for the highest rank. The phenomenon of faculty not being promoted for years on end of continuous service ought to be a thing of the past. Promotion practices or policies that markedly favor administrators as against scholars and teachers scarcely advance the scholarly tradition which is the hallmark of a university.

Research and teaching fellowships — both local and foreign — could be increased severalfold and better administered in a manner consonant with faculty dignity. The faculty ought not to have to follow up their own fund releases or to keep used bus tickets to submit for accounting. Such cares are not only routine drudgery but are needling and humiliating enough to discourage research. More typists, teaching and research assistants, as well as modern office and library equipment, would be necessary to a significant research program.

Over and above these, we would endorse the inclusion of at least one basic political science course in *all* the university curricula without exception, so that every college graduate from the University of the Philippines — whether he be a doctor, nurse, dentist, veterinarian, geographer, teacher, engineer, fisherman, or agriculturist — may have more than a nodding acquaintance with the theory and practice, the systems, methods, and techniques of government and politics. We consider this knowledge fundamental to intelligent participation in the concerns of any nation.

Furthermore, we endorse activism of the constructive kind. The slogan should not be "Learn from the Masses" but rather *Teach the Masses.* Let us train our students to go to the barrios in squads and brigades to help the people physically and uplift them morally through *bayanihan* self-help projects and teach-ins on Rizal instead of Marx, Mabini instead of Mao, Del Pilar instead of Lenin, and Jacinto instead of Chou. If others can teach hatred, we can teach love. Let us enlist our students to form civic action groups, PHILCAGs not for Vietnamese hamlets but for our own impoverished barrios, to open the people's eyes to the positive uses of government not by means of cheap propaganda but by deeds. Towards national solidarity we must develop a Filipino ideology. A true Filipino ideology would not be an instant import but a long and certain formation of ideas and ideals in the Filipino psyche.

From an extended experience in the teaching of political science and the observation of political events, we know that a good theoretical and practical education in government and politics is both

an intrinsic and a civic necessity. The vigilance that is essential to the viability of our institutions and the sophistication that can direct their development towards the highest goals for our people will come not from political apathy, ignorance, or naiveté, but from a generalized interest and internalized awareness in the art of the statesman, that which Aristotle called the master art and the master science which is political science.