

Five years after my editorship of the journal an episode occurred marked by both delayed irony and serious professional delinquency. In 1965, while summering in Vermont, President Thomas Mendenhall of Smith College telephoned about an urgent matter: he declared that I must remove at once the several boxes of ASR files that had been stored in Tyler Annex, a small colonial building that had housed the *Review*. (In 1961, both the ASA Executive Officer and the new Editor of the ASR had declined to take over the files.) The space was needed, Mendenhall explained, for the production of "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?" which was being filmed on Smith's hallowed grounds. I hastened to comply, and without encountering Burton or Taylor (alas), but with the help of friendly grips, managed to shift the heavy boxes from Tyler Annex to my car—and then faced

the problem of their disposition. As I drove northward toward Vermont, Ashfield's town dump, burning on that rainy day, suggested a solution. Thus the routine files of volumes 23, 24, and 25 of the ASR met a fiery fate. The ironic aftermath of this heedless act did not emerge until 1971 when I became chair of the Association's Committee on Archives— notwithstanding my report of this disqualifying crime of desperation.⁵

REFERENCES

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1960 "Report of the Editor." *American Sociological Review* 25 (December):2.

⁵ The seriousness of the crime was lessened only slightly by an earlier action: my removal from the files of several non-routine documents, some of which were turned over to Talcott Parsons, then the chair of the ASA Committee on Publications.

THE ASA—1960–1962*

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EXECUTIVE OFFICER, 1960-1961

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During the two years I was the Executive Officer of the American Sociological Association (then still American Sociological Society) we were a relatively small association. We had, as I recall, no more than around 8,000 members. The office was a single room in the Graduate Department of Sociology at New York University, of which I was chairman, in the Main Building of the University. The staff was small: myself as Executive Officer, Janice Hopper as Administrative Officer (a job well and competently done), a clerical secretary, at busy seasons an office boy or girl, in addition to a lovely woman, near retirement, who seldom appeared in the office but who had the re-

sponsibility for soliciting advertising for the *American Sociological Review* and arranging the book exhibitions at the annual meetings. Matilda White Riley, my immediate predecessor, had left the records, the files, the budget, and indeed everything else in excellent condition (Matilda could not do otherwise), and the momentum she had achieved was indeed useful to me. The job of Executive Officer was part time, and unpaid, but the others I have mentioned were on the payroll. New York University, incidentally, was hospitable to other learned societies as well, including the Modern Language Association.

Among the administrative issues to be dealt with at this time was whether or not to move the office to Washington, D.C. and appoint a full-time Executive Officer who would be able to look after our interests in the Congress—to lobby, in short,

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for and against particular bills—and to cooperate with other learned and scientific societies whose headquarters were in Washington. The late Donald Young, President of the Russell Sage Foundation, was especially active in fostering this move, which has redounded to the benefit of us all. Donald, incidentally, was a pillar of strength throughout my short tenure, as was Talcott Parsons, who was then Secretary of the Association.

One unexpected benefit of my position was an invitation to attend a Congress of the Latin American Sociological Association, in Caracas. Rafael Caldera, a sociologist and lawyer, was then President of Venezuela, and we all enjoyed the hospitality of his presidential estate. The Congress provided an opportunity also, of course, to attend a series of stimulating sessions (with a personal interpreter assigned to me), to meet with colleagues from Central and South American countries, and to discuss the state of sociology in the United States.

Perhaps the most dramatic event of my tenure occurred at the 1962 annual meeting, held in St. Louis. I had, of course, gone on ahead with the office staff to make final checks on the arrangements and to assure myself that everything was in order. It seemed to be. During the first day of the meetings, however, we were informed that one of our members had been denied the use of the hotel swimming pool because he was black. We took our remonstrances immediately to the hotel management, only to be informed that the rules governing pool usage were made not by the hotel but by a private club to which the hotel had leased the facility. We naturally were unimpressed. An emergency meeting of the Council, under the presidency of R. E. L. Faris, was called and we prepared to settle on a course of action. Many of the Council members favored immediate adjournment and a departure en masse from the hotel. One of the members, only half facetiously, proposed that we pitch tents in the park outside and continue our meetings there. Nicholas J. Demerath, II, however, had the best idea. He telephoned the offices of the American Psychological Association, scheduled to meet in the same hotel the following year,

explained the situation, and won from that association a promise that they would indeed reconsider their plans to meet in the hotel, with the strongly implied suggestion that they would withdraw. With this information the hotel management had enough and their opposition collapsed. To my knowledge the Association has not encountered this kind of unpleasantness since.

Among the issues that plagued us during the years in question was whether or not it was appropriate for the Association to take stands on matters of public policy. It had been a perennial issue. Years earlier the Association, at a business meeting, had passed a resolution supporting a strike of hotel and restaurant workers at a hotel in Denver at which the meetings were being held. After the meeting George Lundberg fired off a letter to the *American Sociological Review* in which he pointed to the tiny minority of the members of the Association who had attended the business meeting at which the resolution was passed, and demanded a referendum of the entire membership. Jessie Bernard, with equal vigor, supported the action of the Association as entirely legal, and indeed desirable, and so the confrontation was complete.

It was an issue that would not go away. As everyone knows, the side championed by Jessie Bernard later became the majority and the Association has since provided for the passage of political resolutions at the business meetings. In my time, however, the tension between the two groups was intense. On the one hand the politically dedicated members thought it indecent and inhumane for the Society to maintain a silence on the great issues of the day. On the other hand the purists, however much they agreed with their opponents on the policy issues, thought that the Society should be strictly a learned and scientific society, interested only in the advancement of sociology, and willing to leave political questions to such associations as the AAUP and the ACLU, to which many of the members belonged. As Executive Officer, of course, I could not speak on this matter, but later took my position with the purists, noting especially that these resolutions, which occupied an

inordinate amount of time, were entirely useless, that none of them, for example, had ever been reported in the national press.

When it became apparent that I could not administer a large department at New York University and manage the affairs of a growing American Sociological Society at the same time, I resigned as Executive Officer. By then, plans were well advanced for the move to Washington and so a new and, I may say, a much more active executive office came into being. In 1980 the office, and the Association itself, bear only a small resemblance to what they were twenty years ago. Then there were no sections, no funds for awards, only one journal to produce, no caucuses at the annual meetings, no luncheon roundtables, no didactic seminars, no child care, no paper sales, no committee on professional ethics, no committee on freedom of research and teaching, and no minority fellowship program. These are only some of the current activities that did not exist in 1960–1962.

Growth brings its own rewards. At the same time it often exhibits the defects of its virtues. As a veteran attender of annual meetings—since the mid-thirties no less—I think that they are now too long. Five days of continuous meetings exhaust both body and wallet. I fully understand—as who could not?—the pressure upon the younger members of the Association to appear on its programs and to gain thereby some national visibility, not to say an item on a vita. In addition, only those whose papers have

been accepted for the program normally qualify for travel expenses from their colleges and universities. Session organizers thus are under pressure to accept almost every paper submitted, with little regard for merit. (I once rejected a paper whose author threatened suicide if I did not change my mind.) In recent years I have heard, in fact, several disgraceful papers, obviously written not as contributions to sociological knowledge but only to win a free trip to the meetings.

Finally, increase in size has resulted in some loss of collegiality. The warmth and recognition still characteristic of the regional societies is no longer so evident in the national. Because of increasing cost, and in spite of paid travel expenses, the annual meetings now tend also to be regional in their attendance. That is, meetings in San Francisco for the most part draw a different clientele than those in New York and Boston. I should not wish to exaggerate this phenomenon—and it is obviously not true for those who serve on the Association's committees—but there is no doubt in my mind that it exists.

In spite of changing times and circumstances, however, the American Sociological Association continues to play a large and important—indeed indispensable—role in the lives of its members. I am proud to have been able to serve it in a number of official capacities, not least that of one of its executive officers, and I know that it will continue to thrive whatever vicissitudes of fortune may be waiting in the future.

RECOLLECTIONS OF A HALF CENTURY OF LIFE IN THE ASA*

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PRESIDENT, 1961

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Early on a fine Saturday afternoon in October, around 1923 or 1924, the phone

rang. I, a high school boy, answered. A voice said: "This is Professor Small. Would you like a ticket to the football game?" I had never seen a college football game, although Stagg Field was only two

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