

REPRESENTATION and ELECTORAL SYSTEMS

SECTION ON REPRESENTATION AND ELECTORAL SYSTEMS
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--DUES REMINDER

Please check the dues box for the Section when you receive your dues statement from the American Political Science Association. Section dues are the lowest allowable under the Association's rules governing sections.

CALL FOR 1998 ANNUAL MEETING PAPERS

Section Program Chairman Henry Flores of St. Mary's University (Texas) is seeking proposals and panels on the broad spectrum of issues relating to representation and electoral systems in the United States and other nations. The theme of the 1998 annual meeting is communities. Professor Flores particularly welcomes proposals on "communities of interests" with regard to voting rights and redistricting.

Paper and panel proposals (two copies), as well as offers to chair or serve as a panel discussant, should be sent to APSA 1998 Proposal, 1527 New Hampshire Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036

SECTION 1997 ANNUAL MEETING

The Section's Nominating Committee--Lorn Foster, Raymond V. Christensen, and Joseph F. Zimmerman--submitted the names of the following members for the positions listed below for two year terms:

Chairman:	Mark E. Rush, Washington and Lee University
Secretary-Treasurer:	Wilma Rule, university of Nevada, Reno
Executive Committee:	Lorn Foster, Pomona College; Luis Fraga, Stanford University; Mark E. Rush, Washington and Lee University; Margaret E. Ellis, James Madison University; Richard S. Katz, Johns Hopkins University; Richard L. Engstrom, University of New Orleans; and Wilma Rule, University of Nevada, Reno

The nominees were elected unanimously.

In the absence of Treasurer Wilma Rule, Joseph F. Zimmerman presented the Treasurer's Report revealing that the 1996 beginning balance was \$2,949.35, income was \$759.00, expenses were \$533.29, and the ending balance was \$3,175.06.

The George H. Hallet Award is presented annually to the author of a book published at least ten years ago that has made a lasting contribution to the literature on Representation and Electoral Systems. The Award was presented to John and David Gosnell on behalf of their father Harold Gosnell, who died in January 1997, for his book *Why Europe Votes?* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 19030). The prize money has been contributed to the Centennial Fund of the American Political Science Association. The Hallet Award Committee members were Henry Flores, Kathleen Barber, and Arend Lijphard.

The Leon Weaver Award for the best paper presented at a panel sponsored by the Section at the 1996 Annual meeting of the Association in San Francisco was presented to John Gibson and Anna Cielacka for "The Polish Electoral System: An Unrepresentative Outlier?" Members of the Award Committee were Douglas Amy, Jason Kirsey, and Richard Matland.

PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION PAMPHLET

Crescent Street Press [157 Crescent Street, Northampton, Massachusetts 01060, telephone: (513) 586-9395] has published *Proportional Representation: The Case for a Better Election System* by Douglas J. Amy. This pamphlet explains how many of our election problems are due to flaws in our single-member district, winner-take-all system, and how our elections could be revitalized by adopting a proportional representation (PR)

system which is the most popular election system in the world. PR, according to the pamphlet, ensures that all voters are represented and that all major and minor parties receive legislative seats in proportion to their share of the votes cast. Amy reports that most election experts consider this system to be fairer and more democratic than winner-take-all elections, and switching to PR would produce city, state, and federal legislatures that are more representative and more responsive to the American people.

Copies of the pamphlet are available at three dollars per copy from The Center for Voting and Democracy, P.O. Box 60037, Washington, D.C. 20039.

THE INTERNATIONAL IDEA HANDBOOK OF ELECTORAL SYSTEMS

The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance [Strömborg, S-103-34 Stockholm, Sweden. E-Mail: info@int-idea.se] has published *The International Idea Handbook of Electoral System Design* with chapters devoted to an overview of the world of electoral systems; the systems and their consequences; special parliamentary considerations; presidential, upper house, and local government elections; costs and administrative implications; and advice for electoral system designers. The appendices contain data on the electoral systems of 211 independent states and related territories as of 1997, a glossary of terms, and a bibliography.

FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION REPORTS

The Federal Election Commission (Washington, D.C. 20463) has published *Federal Elections 96* containing data on the votes for presidential and vice presidential electors, and Senate and House of Representatives candidates.

The Commission on April 22, 1997, released a report revealing that financial activity by political action committees (PACs) increased during the 1995-96 election cycle. PACs raised \$437.4 million, an increase of 12 percent over 1994; spent \$429.9 million, an increase of 11 percent; and had cash on hand totaling \$103.9 million as of December 31, 1996.

PACs contributed \$217.8 million to federal candidates during the 1995-96 cycle, an increase of \$28.5 million (15%) compared to the previous two year cycle. Most of the money, \$203.9 million, went to candidates seeking election in 1995-96 and the balance went to candidates running for office in future years, or to debt retirement for candidates in past cycles. Incumbents received \$146.4 million, challengers were given \$31.6 million, and open seat candidates \$39.8 million. Contributions to incumbents represent a lower proportion of total contributions than has been common in recent election cycles.

For the first time in recent years, Republican candidates received more PAC contributions than their Democratic counterparts. The disparity between the parties was

not as great, however, as it had been in previous cycles when the Democrats controlled both chambers in Congress. Republican candidates received \$118.1 million from PACs, an increase of \$46.5 million from the previous cycle, while Democratic candidates received \$98.9 million, a decrease of \$18.8 million from the 1993-94 cycle.

In addition to the \$217.8 million in contributions, PACs made \$106 million in independent expenditures for and against candidates, a \$5.5 million increase over the previous cycle. Of the total, \$6.8 million was spent on behalf of various candidates and \$3.8 million was spent against them. Most of the money, \$9.1 million, was spent in congressional races. In the presidential campaign, PACs independent spending decreased from \$4.0 million in 1992 to \$1.4 million in 1996.

The Commission has sent a report to Congress and the President on the impact of the National Voter Registration Act of 1993, often referred to as the "Motor Voter" law.

States reported 142,995,856 registered voters in 1996, amounting to 72.77 percent of the voting age population, which is the highest percentage in any election since 1960 when reliable records first were available. The report notes that voters registration in those states covered by the Act rose in 1996 by 1.82 percent over 1992. The total nationwide increase in registered voters from 1992 to 1996 was 9,183,680. Motor vehicles offices generated the most voter registration applications (33.1%), postcard registration accounted for 29.7 percent, and registration drives, deputy registrars, and in-person registrations accounted for 26.1 percent of all applications.,

On July 25, 1997, the Commission reported that the number of federally registered PACs decreased by 204 since December 1996, bringing the total number of registered PACs to 3,875. Corporate PACs remain the largest category with 1,602 committees, followed by non-connected (956), trade/membership/health PACs (826), labor (332), corporations without stock (118), and cooperatives (41).

MONOPOLY POLITICS

The Center for Voting and Democracy [P.O. Box 60037, Washington, D.C. 20039. Telephone: (301) 270-4616] on July 23, 1997, released *Monopoly Politics* which predicts winners in 360 United States House of Representatives races in the November 1998 general elections. The comprehensive report explains how--and exactly why--the great majority of House elections will be non-competitive in 1998.

The report lists near-certain winners in the 1998 House elections simply based on the presidential performance in the districts and results in the past three House elections. The report includes a series of fact sheets that demonstrate the consistency of voters in federal elections--a consistency that is unshaken by vast disparities in campaign spending.

Monopoly Politics contains an analysis of innovative redistricting methods used in Iowa and New Jersey. The report also provides information on proportional representation voting system and is available at a cost of ten dollars.

BOOK REVIEW DEPARTMENT: Editor, Margaret E. Ellis, James Madison University

Russian Women in Politics and Society
 edited by Wilma Rule and Norma C. Noonan
 (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press , 1996)

Kay M. Knickrehm
 James Madison University

This collection of original essays examines women in Russia in the political, social and economic spheres and ends with a section on women's rights. All of the essays are well written and researched and together provide a complete picture of life for women in Soviet and post-Soviet Russia.

Wilma Rule's introductory essay establishes the theme for much of the volume. She presents carefully chosen statistical information about the status of women in Russia which illustrates the paradoxical position that women occupy. Women in Russia have enjoyed greater formal rights than women in many liberal democracies but in practice they been disadvantaged. Although more fully integrated into the occupational structure than women in the West, Russian women face greater unemployment than men, receive lower wages, and are absent from high level economic and political positions. Although Women of Russia was one of the more successful groups in the 1993 election, women remain under represented in government. In her introduction Rule proposes a model of political recruitment that helps to explain women's electoral success in established democracies and suggests that factors in Russia have the potential for increasing women's success in the legislature there. In the fourth essay in the volume Rule and Nadezhda Shvedova examine the 1993 and 1995 elections for the Duma and find evidence confirming this model.

The other two essays in the first section intersect nicely. Together they provide an overview of Russian women in politics during the Soviet period. In the first of these essays, Carol Nechemias surveys the entire Communist period identifying dominant themes in women's political roles under successive leaders.. Although the emphasis on the role of women differs at times, Nechemias presents convincing evidence that in spite of communist rhetoric, women's involvement in politics was often artificial, that women lacked significant power in all eras and that stereotypes of women prevailed socially and politically. Under Gorbachev, discussion of women's issues became possible, but in general women made little progress. Joel Moses focusses on image and reality. He agrees that women were marginalized in spite of rhetoric to the contrary. Further he argues that the Communist practice of involving women heavily in local level politics through quota systems has had the effect of stigmatizing women. It is difficult for women to overcome the image of apparatchiki and collaboration.

In Part II, Marcelline Hutton surveys the status of women in society from the Tsars to the present and her analysis reinforces the findings discussed in the political section. In spite of some advances economically and socially women continue to face discrimination and stereotyping. Norma C. Noonan's chapter on Bolshevism and the Russian women's movement is one of the most analytical (and I think one of the best) of the essays presented. She provides an insightful discussion of feminism in Russian and its relation to westernization. This essay is well worth reading for anyone interested in social movements.

Part III addresses economic issues. These chapters are more descriptive and provide an historical overview of the Soviet and post-Soviet economies and their effects on women. They are informative but lack the analytical character of the earlier essays. The chapter by Ardishhvili on Soviet economics barely mentions women. Similarly in Part IV, the chapter by Richard Anderson on the constitution gives an excellent overview but the focus is on the new constitutional order rather than on women.

The last two chapters of the book provide a strong conclusion. Dorothy McBride Stetson analyzes the formal legal rights granted Russian women in light of political theory concerning the separation between the public and private spheres. Her conclusion is that although the formal legal provisions enacted by the Bolsheviks governing such things as marriage, rape and abortion are more consistent with women's human rights in Soviet Russia than in the West, these were abridged during the Stalinist years. Although new laws are progressive, it is too early to tell how they will be applied. In the final essay, Noonan concludes that although women received unparalleled formal rights after the 1917 revolution, the promises to women of equality were never fulfilled.

This book is a valuable edition to the literature on women in politics and society. It provides a fairly complete picture of the condition of Russian women and makes clear how the past informs the present. The comparative nature of many of the essays provide insights into the condition of women worldwide on how structural, legal, and cultural factors influence their condition.

New Federalist Papers: Essays in Defense of the Constitution

Alan Brinkley, Nelson W. Polsby and Kathleen M. Sullivan

New York: W. W. Norton, 1997

179 pp. \$23.00 cloth.

In a day and age when critics of the Constitution abound and the only people unabashedly in favor of the status quo are those whose principal stake therein derives from the size of the armory they wish to maintain in their homes, it is refreshing, if not relieving, to encounter a thoughtful assessment of the strengths of the Constitution, coupled with a challenge to reformers.

Alan Brinkley, Nelson Polsby and Kathleen Sullivan have compiled a thoughtful and provocative collection of essays in the New Federalist Papers. They take on all comers, from advocates of proportional representation to proponents of term limits to neo-antifederalists. They force the reader to stop and assess whether the constitutional

system has failed so abysmally that the plethora of reform movements is necessary or justified. Unquestionably, proponents of political reform will be taken aback because the three authors leave virtually no reform movement unscathed. If the book's argument can be distilled to a sentence or two, the thrust would be that history supports the wisdom of the Framers and that it is up to reformers to refute that history in order to justify their attempts to tinker with the constitutional system.

The book is divided into five parts, each of which contains several essays. Part 1 praises "The Foresight of the Framers;" part 2 addresses "Modern Politics and its Discontents;" part 3, "The Constitution in a Word Processor" condemns contemporary machinations for constitutional amendments; part 4, "Delicate Balances" addresses federalism and minority rights; part 5 considers what will happen in "The Next Millennium." Principal targets of the writers are: 1) contemporary antifederalists who would devolve more power to the states; 2) advocates of direct democracy; and 3) proponents of a Westminster model of government.

The essays celebrate the wisdom and durability of the Madisonian system. In general, they point out that while contemporary reform movements may have certain elements of appeal, they also bear substantial costs which their proponents either underestimate, fail to recognize or care not to discuss. Accordingly, much of the current frustration with the pace and complexity of American politics can be dismissed as a failure to appreciate that it represents the smooth functioning of the Madisonian system of checks and balances.

Another theme that runs throughout the essays is that reformers ought to be admonished for overlooking key assumptions upon which the original Federalist rested, as well as panaceas which would seem to ensure virtually instant political gratification for modern malcontents. The lesson to be learned is that while the Framers feared large or despotic government, they did acknowledge the need for an effective national government. Accordingly, contemporary antifederalists who would either hamstring the national government by way of term limits and balanced budget amendments or bypass it completely by devolving more power to the states or expanding the use of initiatives and referenda, are, say Sullivan and Brinkley, quick to forget that the existing constitutional arrangement was developed in reaction to the more decentralized arrangement of the Articles of Confederation that led to disasters such as Shay's rebellion.

The assaults on direct democracy and antifederal attempts to restrict the national government's power are rendered principally by Sullivan and Brinkley. They challenge those who seek to amend the Constitution in order to achieve discrete policy goals such as school prayer, outlawing flag burning, balancing the budget and so forth. Sullivan points out that restricting the national government's authority would place more citizens at the mercy of the local majority factions that Madison feared (10-14). Brinkley notes that the ongoing assault on government in general--in the form of term limits, initiatives, referenda, and so forth--is a threat to the deliberative character of the constitutional system which was designed to ensure that, at the end of the day, the "mild voice of reason" (described by Madison in Federalist 42) would inform political debate (26-27).

Polsby's essays are the most unabashedly supportive of the constitutional system. In response to calls for proportional representation, campaign finance reform and a parliamentarization (Anglicization) of the presidential election process, he deftly confronts would-be reformers with the costs involved in such changes. He points out, for example, that the populace might be unwilling to accept a more issue-oriented campaign if the price were less popular access to the nomination process. In the final chapter, "Constitutional Angst: Does American Democracy Work?," he chastises critics and reformers who harp on the real problems of race and ethnicity that have plagued American history. He points out that "if one accepts the premise that tribalism is a human universal," then the truly remarkable aspect of the American constitutional system is that it has resulted in the "eventual alleviation, reversal or abandonment" of all social policies that discriminated against minorities. He notes that all too frequently, comparisons to other countries are inapt because the nations to which reformers compare the United States unfavorably are invariably much smaller or more ethnically homogeneous.

In sum, the New Federalist Papers will force advocates of reform to rethink their criticisms of the constitutional system and reconsider the remedies they propose for the shortcomings they identify. The essays are thoughtful and concise, and offer a solid defense and advocacy of the constitutional status quo. This having been said, there is no doubt that readers will find points over which they could quibble with the authors or, in some cases, contradictions among the essays. Polsby calls for minimal regulation of campaign finance and Brinkley is compelled to challenge him. Whereas Sullivan points to the Lopez decision as proof that the Supreme Court remains a vigilant protector of the federal balance, Brinkley includes it as an example of the current conservative "assault on government."

The federalism discussions of Brinkley and Sullivan leave the reader wondering where, exactly the balance ought to be struck between federal and state powers. While Sullivan thoughtfully points out that the federal arrangement is less concerned with "rights" than it is with constantly adjusting the balance of powers in order to determine the best arrangements to serve "our ends," (112) it is not clear what those ends are. Both point out that romantic calls for more localism and community actually run the risk of re-establishing the oppressive, unchecked local bigotries that only federal civil rights policies could scale back. Yet, her reliance on the states' political check (116) in the Senate sphere contradicts her assertion that they are overrated (10) and ignores the impact that the 17th Amendment had on the representation of states qua corporate entities.

As well, Polsby and Sullivan seem to talk past each other with regard to the entitlements of racial minorities. The latter advocates affirmative gerrymandering in order to create majority-minority districts in "The Representation of Racial Minorities." In light of the clearly laudable desire to provide representational opportunities for minorities, a switch to some form of PR (which Polsby rejects) would seem to be a practical alternative to the inefficient and controversy-ridden process of redrawing single-member district lines in order to create viable minority-majorities.

Polsby's defense of the American party system and rejection of proportional representation and the Westminster model of government will be especially challenging

to readers of this newsletter. His argument in favor of single-member districts celebrates the fact that this electoral system does serve to break up many interests--including racial and ethnic ones--in order to foster the deliberation and circumspection that the Framers desired. As well, he notes that, unlike PR systems, SMDs provide constituents with identifiable representatives whom they can hold accountable.

Polsby notes that the success of the constitutional system speaks for itself. Nonetheless, success does not rule out the possibility that there may be room for improvement. The two-party, single member district system works fine, but there is no gainsaying that the use of PR especially in urban areas might defuse political tensions that result from majoritarian electoral systems. In this respect, Polsby's defense of the current electoral system is clearly pragmatic since Madison's republican solution was not premised on the formation of two national factions.

Polsby's Madisonian defense of the two-party system is partially premised on the fair observation that the party labels are essentially misnomers that cover up vast ideological differences among state party organizations. Still, his challenge to current advocates of PR might have been stronger if he responded as well to John Stuart Mill's criticism of the SMD electoral system. If Brinkley and Sullivan are right when they note that the new antifederalism threatens us with rule by local tyrannical majorities, Mill's point in *Considerations on Representative Government* that the SMD electoral system produces the same result cannot be dismissed--especially since he contends that PR will have the same effect on factions in legislatures that Madison's republican solution would have on them among the populace.

All quibbles aside, the *New Federalist Papers* reminds us that the Constitution is more than just a set of rules that can and should be altered whenever they are deemed inconvenient by some frustrated political group. The Framers based the Constitution on principles of government that have survived the test of time and that continue to condition the conduct of politics today. Brinkley, Polsby and Sullivan do a superior job of reminding us of that. This is a work that should be on the bookshelf of every member of the profession.

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