

THE FILE

Case Study in Correction
(1977–1979)

Serge Lang



Springer-Verlag
New York Heidelberg Berlin

Serge Lang
Department of Mathematics
Yale University
Box 2155 Yale Station
New Haven, Connecticut, U.S.A.

*All royalties from this book will go to the
Yale University Mathematics Department.*

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Lang, Serge, 1927–
The file.

Includes index.

1. Survey of the American Professoriate,
1977. 2. Social surveys—Methodology—Case
studies. I. Title.

LB2331.72.L36 082 81-8951
LSBN 0-387-90607-X AACR2

© 1981 by Springer-Verlag New York

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be translated or reproduced in any form without written permission from
Springer-Verlag, 175 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10010, U.S.A.

The use of general descriptive names, trade names, trademarks, etc. in this publication, even if the former are not especially
identified, is not to be taken as a sign that such names, as understood by the Trade Marks and Merchandise Marks Act, may
accordingly be used freely by anyone.

9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

ISBN-13: 978-0-387-90607-2

e-ISBN-13: 978-1-4613-8145-7

DOI: 10.1007/978-1-4613-8145-7

Acknowledgements

Springer-Verlag would like to thank the contributors of copyrighted material for permission to include their letters and articles. Specifically, the following credits are in order:

Reprinted with permission from B'nai B'rith Career & Counseling Services *Highlights*:

“The Best Schools in the Country,” March 1979.

Reprinted with permission from *Campus Report*, Stanford University:

“Survey Shows Academics Support Private Business, Fear Big Government Growth,” 18 January 1978.

Reprinted, with permission of the copyright owner, The American Chemical Society, from the January 29 and March 26, 1979, issues of *Chemical and Engineering News*:

“Harvard Chemistry Faculty Ranked Best,” January 29, 1979.

Martin Gouterman, letter to the editor (“Criticism of Faculty Survey”), March 26, 1979.

Reprinted with permission from *The Chronicle of Higher Education*:

Everett Carl Ladd, Jr., and Seymour Martin Lipset:

“The Faculty Mood: Pessimism Is Predominant,” October 3, 1977. “Most Professors Would Postpone Retirement if Law Were Changed,” November 7, 1977. “Professors Give ‘Fairly High Marks’ to U.S. Agencies,” December 12, 1977. “Professors Found to Be Liberal but Not Radical,” January 16, 1978. “Faculty Support for Unionization: Leveling Off at About 75 Per Cent,” February 13, 1978.

“Background of a Continuing Controversy over the Ladd–Lipset Survey of Professors,” Lang’s Critique and Ladd’s Response, November 20, 1978.

Letters to the editor:

Sigmund Diamond (February 21, 1978). Herbert Garfinkel, Philip G. Altbach, Manfred Stanley (March 6, 1978). Gabriel Haim (March 27 and April 17, 1978). Mary P. Bass (October 30, 1978). Tore Dalenius (April 23, 1979).

News articles of October 11, 17, 25, and 31, November 7, 14, 21, and 28, 1977; January 23, 1978; January 15 and February 13, 1979.

Reprinted with permission from *The Daily Californian*:

Joel Grover, “Berkeley Campus Ranks Second among Colleges, Universities in Academic Poll,” January 24, 1979.

Editorial: “Academic Awards,” February 21, 1979.

Reprinted with permission from *The Daily Pennsylvanian*:

Sherman Cohen, “Some Are Left Cold by Controversial Faculty Survey,” February 16, 1979.

Reprinted with permission from *The Daily Princetonian*:

Harman Grossman, “Faculty Receives Mediocre Ratings in Highly Controversial New Survey,” January 24, 1979.

Mike Jarman:

“Yale Math Professor Attacks Controversial Survey,” April 26, 1979. “Critics Attack Lipset Survey, Cite ‘Ratings,’ Social Query,” April 27, 1979. “Lang Charges Chronicle with Misrepresentation,” April 30, 1979.

Reprinted with permission from *Frankfurter Allgemeine*:

Die besten Universitäten der Vereinigten Staaten, 21 März 1979.

Reprinted with permission from *The Guardian Weekly*, Manchester, England:

Jonathan Steele, “Why Campus Morale Has Plunged,” January 22, 1978.

Reprinted with permission from *The Harvard Crimson*:

Kathleen E. McDonough, “Professor Criticizes Lipset Poll,” April 30, 1977.

Joanne L. Kenen, “Harvard Keeps 1950s Files Confidential,” December 9, 1977.

“Recent Survey Rates Harvard ‘Best’ In Seven Departments,” January 19, 1979.

Reprinted, by permission of the authors, from *International Statistical Review*:

William Kruskal and Frederick Mosteller, “Representative Sampling, I: Non-scientific Literature,” *International Statistical Review* 47 (1979).

Reprinted with permission from *The New York Review of Books*. Copyright © 1977 Nyrev, Inc.:

Sigmund Diamond, “Veritas at Harvard,” April 28, 1977.

Letters to the editor:

McGeorge Bundy, Eugene D. Genovese, Sigmund Diamond, May 26, 1977. Seymour Martin Lipset, Sigmund Diamond, June 9, 1977. Robert N. Bellah, McGeorge Bundy, Clark Kerr, Marshall Cohen et al., Sigmund Diamond, July 14, 1977. Laurence Veysey, Serge Lang, September 28, 1978. Serge Lang, “The Professors: A Survey of a Survey,” May 18, 1978.

© 1978/9 by The New York Times Company. Reprinted by permission:

Lally Weymouth, “22 Foundation Woes; The Saga of Henry Ford II: Part II,” *The New York Times Magazine*, March 12, 1978.

Edward B. Fiske:

“Probing the Professoriate for Profound and Other Differences,” *The New York Times*, July 9, 1978.

“Questionnaire Sparks Tumult in Academe,” *The New York Times*, May 29, 1979.

Reprinted with permission from the Conference Board of the mathematical Sciences *Newsletter*:

Saunders Mac Lane, letter to the editor, October–November 1979.

Copyright 1966, 1977, 1979, by Newsweek, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Reprinted by Permission:

“Apocalyptic Protest” (with photo: courtesy of UPI, used by permission), April 4, 1966.

“The Unhappy Profs,” October 24, 1977.

“The Best Universities,” February 19, 1979.

Reprinted from Saunders Mac Lane, Letter to the Editor, *Notices of the AMS*, volume 26, number 1, page 64, by permission of the American Mathematical Society. © 1979 by the American Mathematical Society:

Saunders Mac Lane, letter, January 1979.

Reprinted, by permission of the author, from *Parade*:

Pamela Swift, “Keeping Up . . . With Youth,” March 18, 1979.

Reprinted with permission from *Princeton Alumni Weekly*:

“Academic Ratings Game,” April 9, 1979.

Reprinted, by permission of the authors, from *Science*. Copyright 1972, 1976, by the American Association for the Advancement of Science:

Everett Carll Ladd, Jr., and Seymour Martin Lipset, “Politics of Academic Natural Scientists and Engineers,” *Science*, Vol. 176, pp. 1091–1100, 9 June 1972.

Walter P. Metzger, “Leanings of the Professoriate,” *Science*, Vol. 191, pp. 279–280, 23 January 1976.

Reprinted with permission from *Science*. Copyright 1978 by the American Association for the Advancement of Science:

Gina Bari Kolata, "Polling the Professors: Survey Draws Protest," *Science*, Vol. 199, pp. 751–755, 17 February 1978.

C. Borrás, "AAAS Annual Elections," *Science*, Vol. 200, p. 263, 21 April 1978.

Reprinted by permission of *The Wall Street Journal*, © Dow Jones & Company, Inc. 1978. All Rights Reserved:

"Do Professors Hate Business?," March 27, 1978.

Reprinted with permission from *The Washington Post*, © 1976:

Lou Cannon, "Press Secretaries Acknowledge 'Lies'," April 24, 1976.

Reprinted from *Washington Square News*:

Leslie Gura, "Polls Show NYU Not Noted For Being Among the Best," February 26, 1979.

Reprinted with permission from the *Yale Daily News*:

Paul J. Bass, "Professors Assail Survey of College Faculty Members; University Ranks High in Survey," February 20, 1979.

Selection from "Political Controversies at Harvard, 1636 to 1974," by Seymour Martin Lipset. Reprinted by permission of the author, from *Education and Politics at Harvard*, New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1975.

Contents

List of Principal Participants	ix
Introductory Letter to the Reader	1
Why bother? (Your point of view). Why bother? (My point of view). Editorial responsibility.	
The letters. Introductory and other comments. Objectivity.	
The Story: Summary, by Serge Lang	6
A Reply to Lang, by Everett Carl Ladd and Seymour Martin Lipset	18
The Ladd–Lipset Surveys—A Brief Review. The Methodology of the 1977 Survey. Survey Research on Public Opinion and Social Values. Sampling. Nonresponse. Question Design and Questionnaire Development. Envoi.	

THE FILE

“The 1977 Survey of the American Professoriate”	33
VERITAS AT HARVARD, by Sigmund Diamond	57
from the <i>New York Review of Books</i> , 28 April 1977	

The First Year

Part One:	The Opening Exchange	65
Part Two:	From Koblitz’s Letter to Lang’s Fifteen Pages of Comments	87
Part Three:	From Lang’s Comments to the <i>Science</i> Article	105
Part Four:	From <i>Science</i> to <i>New York Review of Books</i>	129
Part Five:	The Garfinkel Letter (“McCarthyism”?)	179
Part Six:	The <i>New York Review of Books</i> Article	195

The Second Year

Part Seven:	Trying to Settle Loose Ends	231
Part Eight:	The <i>Chronicle</i> Causes a Rebound	265
Part Nine:	From Mac Lane’s Letter to the Editors (<i>Notices</i> , AMS) to Lang’s Letter to the Editor (<i>Bulletin</i> , AAUP)	299
Part Ten:	The Stakes Are Raised	325
Part Eleven:	The “Ratings” Get Publicity	359
Part Twelve:	The AAUP– <i>Chronicle</i> Relation	387
Part Thirteen:	End of the Second Year	425

Into a Third Year

Part Fourteen:	“McCarthyism”? (Again)	457
Part Fifteen:	“Intemperate and Libelous”?	473
Part Sixteen:	Ladd–Lipset, Survey Research, Sociology. Can We Generalize? How?	505
Part Seventeen:	The Story Goes On	543
Part Eighteen:	Closing the File	557

Appendices

Appendix I.	The Ladd–Lipset Articles on “The 1977 Survey . . .” in <i>The Chronicle of Higher Education</i>	573
Appendix II.	Documents on the Carnegie–ACE 1969 Survey	619
	Lang Letter to Clark Kerr on the 1969 Survey	621
	Review of <i>The Divided Academy</i> by Walter Metzger in <i>Science</i> , 1973	623
	Ladd–Lipset Article in <i>Science</i> , 1972	625
Appendix III.	“Representative Sampling, I: Non-scientific Literature,” by William Kruskal and Frederic Mosteller	635
Appendix IV.	VERITAS AT HARVARD	649
	Original Diamond Article, <i>New York Review of Books</i> , 28 April 1977	651
	The Complete Exchange of Letters to the Editors from <i>New York Review of Books</i> : 28 April, 26 May, 9 June, 14 July 1977	656
	Pages 190–197 from Lipset’s Piece in <i>Education and Politics at Harvard</i> , and the Last Page, p. 256	670
	<i>Crimson</i> Article: “Harvard Keeps 1950s Files Confidential”	680
<hr style="width: 20%; margin: 10px auto;"/>		
Some Themes and Issues, by S. Lang		681
	Correction. “The 1977 Survey of the American Professoriate”: quality; use of the questionnaire; academic effect; administrative effect and public effect. Survey research. Sociology. Social Sciences. VERITAS AT HARVARD. Scholarship: academic only? active? political? Journalistic power; the cc list; letters to the editor. Financial power. Subservience to authority and power: intellectual authority; statutory authority and power. The competence of the surveyors. The personal aspect of the file. The methodology of the file. Collegiality. Responsibility: institutional; journalistic; scientific; personal. Conclusion.	
Publication of the File		695
	Comments and Letters	
	“Selective Memory and Scholarly Controversy,” by Seymour Martin Lipset	
Index		709

Principal Participants

AAAS: American Association for the Advancement of Science
American Academy of Arts and Sciences (not called AAAS in the file)
AAUP: American Association of University Professors
ACE: American Council on Education
Chronicle of Higher Education
COSPUP: Committee on Scientific and Public Policy, National Academy of Sciences
CUNY: City University of New York
Daily Princetonian: Student newspaper, Princeton University
Editorial Projects for Education
NAS: National Academy of Sciences
NSF: National Science Foundation
New York Times
Newsweek
Princeton Alumni Weekly
Science: Magazine, official publication of AAAS

Abelson, Philip: Editor, *Science*
Atkinson, Richard: Director, National Science Foundation
Ballotti, Geno: member of Board of Governors, Editorial Projects for Education, and for *Chronicle of Higher Education*
Baratz, Morton: General Secretary, AAUP
Bass, Mary: Vice Chancellor for Legal Affairs, City University of New York
Bellah, Robert: Professor of Sociology, University of California, Berkeley
Beyers, Robert W: Board of Governors as above, Director of news and publications, Stanford University
Birtel, Frank: Provost, Tulane University
Bowen, William: President, Princeton; former Chairman of the Board, ACE
Bundy, McGeorge: President, Ford Foundation;
Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at Harvard, in 1954
Cabot, Louis: Chairman, Sloan Commission on Government and Higher Education
Carey, William: Executive Officer, AAAS
Cicourel, Aaron: Professor of Sociology, University of California, San Diego
Creesy, Charles: Editor, Princeton Alumni Weekly
Dabney, Ross: Professor of English, Sweet Briar College
Dalenius, Tore: Professor of Statistics, University of Stockholm and Brown
Diaconis, Persi: Professor of Statistics, Stanford University

Diamond, Sigmund: Professor of Sociology, Columbia University
 Duster, Troy: Professor of Sociology, U of C, Berkeley
 Dyen, Isidore: President, Yale Chapter, AAUP
 Fiske, Edward: Education Editor, New York Times
 Friedman, Martha: President, AAUP
 Garfinkel, Herbert: Provost, University of Nebraska
 Gerson, E. M.: Sociologist, San Francisco
 Goldhaber, J. K.: Professor of Mathematics, University of Maryland; Executive Secretary, Mathematics Section, National Research Council
 Gouterman, Martin: Professor of Chemistry, University of Washington
 Gwaltney, Corbin: Editor, *Chronicle of Higher Education*
 Hamilton, Charles: Professor of Political Science, Columbia University
 Harriss, C. Lowell: Professor of Economics, Columbia University
 Howe, Roger: Professor of Mathematics, Yale
 Jarman, Mike: Junior at Princeton, Reporter for the *Daily Princetonian*
 Kamb, Barclay: Chairman, Geology Department, California Institute of Technology (Caltech)
 Kaysen, Carl: Staff Director, Sloan Commission on Government and Higher Education
 Kerr, Clark: Director, Carnegie Council on Policy Studies in Higher Education
 Koblitz, Neal: Assistant Professor of Mathematics, Harvard
 Kolata, Gina: Reporter for *Science*
 Kruskal, William: Professor of Statistics, Dean of the Division of Social Sciences, University of Chicago
 Kuhl, Leonard: Dean of Physical Sciences, University of California, Berkeley
 Ladd, Everett C.: Professor of Political Science, Director of the Social Science Data Center, University of Connecticut; co-director of "The 1977 Survey of the American Professoriate"
 Lang, Serge: Professor of Mathematics, Yale
 Lemonick, Aaron: Dean of the Faculty, Princeton
 Levy, Marion: Professor of Sociology, Princeton
 Lipset, Seymour Martin: Professor of Political Science and Sociology, Hoover Institution, Stanford University; co-director of "The 1977 Survey of the American Professoriate"; Vice President, American Academy of Arts and Sciences; member, Editorial Board of the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences; National Academy of Education; foreign member of the Finnish Academy of Sciences; fellow of AAAS; has served as a member of the Councils of the American Political Science Association and the American Sociological Association; recipient of several prizes, e.g. MacIver Award and Gunnar Myrdal Prize; elected President American Political Science Association, 1981
 Luria, S. E.: Director, Institute for Cancer Research, MIT
 Mac Lane, Saunders: Professor of Mathematics, University of Chicago; Vice President, National Academy of Sciences
 Merton, Robert: Professor of Sociology and University Professor, Columbia University.
 Metzger, Walter: Professor of History, Columbia University
 Miskimin, Harry: President, Yale Chapter, AAUP (replaced Dyen 1 July 1979)
 Moore, Calvin: Professor of Mathematics, former Dean, U of C, Berkeley
 Palais, Richard, Professor of Mathematics, Brandeis University
 Pifer, Alan: President, Carnegie Corporation
 Priest, Bill J.: Chairman of the Board, ACE
 Riessman, Frank: Sociologist, City University of New York
 Schiffries, Craig: Junior and Senior at Yale
 Schiller, Herbert: Professor of Communications, U of C, San Diego
 Scully, Malcolm: Senior Editor, *Chronicle of Higher Education*

Semas, Philip: Managing Editor, *Chronicle of Higher Education*
Shott, Susan: Advanced graduate student in Statistics, University of Chicago
Silvers, Robert: Editor, *New York Review of Books*
Spain, David: Associate Professor, Anthropology, University of Washington
Steiner, Peter: Former President, AAUP
Tate, John: Professor of Mathematics, Harvard
Unila, Edith: Editorial Assistant, *Chronicle of Higher Education*
Veysey, Laurence: Professor of History, University of California, Santa Cruz
Webb, Robert: Editor, *Bulletin-Academe*, AAUP
Welebir, Marie: Administrative Secretary, AAUP

Dear Reader,

Since April 1977, I have kept a file of letters and documents which went back and forth during a major public controversy which involved a good part of the education network. This book consists of a reproduction of the file, up to closing time, 3 November 1979.

In this introductory letter, it is appropriate to make some general comments dealing with three topics: why should you bother to read it; why did I bother to make it; editorial responsibility. After this, I shall give a summary of the story.

Why bother? (Your point of view). Why bother to look into this book? It is long and it is heavy. It does not follow the usual format of books. The special cases considered might not seem worth the effort put into it.

I would like you to use “the file” to stimulate your own thinking about analogous problems which you will encounter in your own life. One of its main points of interest, as I see it, is the close study of sources of misinformation and confusion, over many domains, applicable in many other instances. We are dealing here with the press at large, the *New York Times*, *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (with a circulation of 67,000, going to university administrators and the education establishment primarily); several famous foundations (Carnegie, Sloan, National Science Foundation); the AAAS (American Association for the Advancement of Science); The AAUP (American Association of University Professors); the National Academy of Sciences; sociology; survey research; other academic research and its effects on people, education, and politics; McCarthyism; etc. Cf. the section on themes and issues.

The form of the book—direct confrontation of ideas by the participants themselves—is in some sense new and unusual, but it makes for an intensity which would not come out otherwise.

The file is long because it deals with many issues and their relations. It includes many original documents and articles which you will need to form your own opinion. The file is long also because as a result of the confrontation, some people did and said things which then motivated their opponents to escalate their efforts. Each time the stakes were raised, and the circle of participants was expanding, as were the issues. I placed no a priori limits which would cut the file short, and I let the interplay of forces expand freely. On the other hand, if those whom I opposed at any time had made an appropriate correction to their operation, this would have cut short the file. If this had been done at the beginning, there would have been no file at all. The combination of an attempted correction with the refusal to make the correction lead to an expansion of the file.

The file does not chronicle just a dry academic exchange. I think you will find in it elements of drama and suspense. Each person plays his or her self. The dramatic confrontation of the letters provides a literary form for the confrontation of points of view on many issues which I want you to face. The suspense was even greater when the file was distributed originally in serialized form, as the letters came in, every few weeks, because no one knew exactly what would happen next. Some of this suspense may disappear in the final version. Getting the file in installments averaging, say, 20 to 30 pages, is different from being faced with the present single volume.

The file need not be read like an ordinary book. At any one spot, you might well take off on your own thoughts, with your own reactions, and your own free associations of ideas. One particular confrontation might be more meaningful to you than to another. Passages which you may skip through lightly at one time may hold a special interest for another.

I can also see very well the file being used in courses in sociology, journalism, political science, psychology, etc. as a source of raw material on which students could write papers covering a very wide range of topics. It has, in fact, already been used in that way, and I have had requests for it from scholars who found its documentation interesting and relevant to their work.

Why bother? (My point of view). Some people have asked me why I spent my time compiling and making up the file. They seem to attach some importance to an answer. I don't make much of it, but for those who are interested, I shall say a few words here. They should not be taken as a substitute for the several letters explaining my purposes and principal interests, especially the following:

my "motivation letter," 19 January 1978, p. 3.1;
 my letter concerning "objectives," 29 March 1978, p. 5.3;
 my letter on "issues of responsibility," 3 May 1979, p. 13.22
 my closing letter giving my "principal interest," p. 18.9

I don't like the nonsense that passes for rational discourse so often in our society. I am very much bothered by the inaccuracies, ambiguities, code words, slogans, catch phrases, public relation devices, sweeping generalizations, and stereotypes, which are used (consciously or otherwise) to influence people.

I am bothered by the inability of many to recognize these for what they are. I am bothered by the way people fudge issues, or are unable to clarify them, sometimes because they are inhibited by "collegiality" and other forms of intimidation (sometimes subtle, sometimes not). Most people put up with the nonsense without doing anything about it (unable or unwilling, for whatever reason—inertia, lack of energy, lack of interest, lack of time, etc.), often falling into cynicism and despair.

I am bothered by the misinformation which gets disseminated uncritically through the media and by the obstructions which prevent correct information from being disseminated. These obstructions come about in many ways—personal, institutional, through self-imposed inhibitions, through external inhibitions, through outright dishonesty, through incompetence—the list is a long one.

I am bothered by the way misinformation, disguised as scholarship, is used in social, political, and educational contexts to affect policy decisions.

I am bothered by the way misinformation is accepted uncritically, and by the way people are unable to recognize it or reject it.

In the file, I have tried to put scholarship in the service of action to deal with these problems, and to stop the nonsense.

Some people have asked me what such an activity has to do with mathematics—which is my main activity in life. Why should I not be interested in other aspects of intellectual activity? I also play musical instruments. Occasionally, I make up a file. Other people write scholarly books on a variety of topics. It is true that they usually write on topics associated with their fields. But why be puzzled by the disparity between a standard label ("mathematics") and the existence of another activity not closely related to the one usually associated with such a label? There is something in me that makes me want to make others understand explicitly the assumptions under which they operate. I want to make people think independently and clearly.

Many people have told me that I "have done the academic community a great service" (for instance, this quote is from a letter of the Dean of Faculty at Brandeis). On the other hand, some think it was a waste of time, or that it is a "sick file" (cf. the letter p. 16.11). So be it. You can form your own opinion on the basis of the documentation.

This is not the first "file" I have made, nor is it the last. But it is the first one to be published.

Editorial responsibility. All letters and documents in the file were sent to a number of people, called the *cc list*. The principal ones are explicitly named at the bottom of each letter. From five charter members in April 1977, the *cc list* grew to about 140 at closing time (3 November 1979). About half that list consists of “principal participants,” listed at the beginning of the book. Names are identified for convenience of references. If I sent a letter to someone critical of something he or she had done, or asking questions, and he or she replied, I felt responsible to communicate this reply to those who had received copies of my letter in the first place, to insure the proper right of rebuttal. This process is a fast expanding one, and leads to a heavy responsibility on my part in providing an open forum and appropriate documentation.

Whenever someone joined the *cc list* (often involuntarily), he or she received a copy of the entire file from the beginning, together with the most recent mailing. Such mailings were made at various intervals, depending on how fast communications and documents were coming in. At the height of the exchange, in Spring 1978, they occurred about once every three weeks. From December 1978 to May 1979, they occurred about once a month. At other times, they were more sporadic. The last mailing, made the first week of November 1979 included material which had accumulated since July.

I have influenced the development of the file, its content, and its direction by the letters I wrote. Sometimes when I felt that some issues were unclear, or when I wished to draw parallels between various statements or situations, I wrote comments and analyses. Conversely, my correspondents could answer as they wished, and raise whatever issues they wanted. They did so not only by writing me or each other (copy to me), but also by having their point of view published, for instance in leveling against me the charge of McCarthyism (*New York Times*, 29 May 1979; *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 6 March 1978). All such documents became part of the file, and were thus sent to the *cc list*. The most active correspondents were advised of the intention to close the file well in advance, to give them a chance to make a final contribution if they so desired.

The file deals with a large number of topics. I have gone wherever I was led. The multiplicity of themes and issues makes some people uncomfortable. Some people find some of the topics “irrelevant.” Some people have told me that I would be more “successful” if I limited myself to only one topic, and if the file was so “edited.” I think on the contrary that the interrelationships between many themes and issues make the file more interesting, and I find these relationships essential. This is merely the first of many confrontations of outlook you will have to sort out for yourself.

Most books engage in generalities and attempt to convince the reader by mentioning specific examples (if at all) as secondary to more general statements. I proceed in exactly the opposite way. I present you with very concrete cases, with the original documents, and with a confrontation of outlooks in order to make it possible for you to think through the issues on your own. I hope that you will then recognize analogous situations in your own experience, and will apply to these the same rigorous standards of accuracy and completeness which I have tried to uphold here. I do not fudge in the statements of my opinions, but I also tell you:

If you do not agree with my letters and analyses, please read the documentation carefully, and only then make up your mind. Do not reject a priori certain data. Please realize that what is irrelevant to you may be important to someone else.

My approach may require some effort on your part, but I think it is a more effective way of making people think. At any rate, it is different from the usual way. I try not to tell you what to think, but to develop your own critical sense. The concrete instances discussed in the file may thus become stimuli for independent thinking in other circumstances.

The file follows a “spiral” structure, which does not disguise the expanding history of a process subject to many forces. Opinions may differ concerning the value of such a structure. If I did not think it valuable, I would not have put it together.

You will find some “false statements” throughout the file, several of which are non-trivial, that is, they

deal with the substance of major issues. Often I point to such false statements, and I document accurately certain contradictions. I wish to emphasize that I do not claim that my correspondents are “lying.” To some extent, it is for you to determine what might go on in someone’s mind when that person makes a documentably false statement. I personally think I can describe what goes on (frequently) by saying that often people create a reality of their own. At any given time, this reality may contradict the reality which they created at another time. If they put their realities in writing (and I definitely try to get them to do so) then the juxtaposition of these realities gives rise to a documentably false statement.

This creation of conflicting realities is not the same as accidental “mistakes” or deliberate “mistakes.” There is a broad spectrum of possibilities which may apply to any given false statement. On the whole, I prefer to document the false statements and let others analyze (if they wish) under what categories they may fall.

The creation of different realities at different times giving rise to false statements is also different from the possibility of people changing their mind about various issues. Furthermore, people may not always be extremely careful about what they write.

The letters. I reproduce exactly everyone’s letters and publications so that I don’t have to paraphrase what others say or write or publish. If what someone writes is false, I document the contradiction. If what someone writes is ambiguous, I ask for clarification. If I quote from some letter or article, the full document from which I quote is made immediately available in the file for cross reference.

In any case, the letters reproduced in the file can be expected to represent their authors’ position only at the time they were written. I take full editorial responsibility for reproducing the entire file as a record of what went on, and for its publication. A section at the end of the book deals briefly with some of the problems which arose in connection with the publication of the file.

The file is organized chronologically, and is as complete as I could make it for the period covered (April 1977 to 3 November 1979).

Following articles (in *Science* and *New York Review*), I also received many letters; some from strangers asking for reprints of certain documents, other letters supporting me, and one letter against me. I decided that such letters would not be part of “the file” unless someone asked or allowed his communication to be included. When these people were writing me, they knew only of the published article. They did not know of the existence of “the file,” but some of them were put on the cc list after they wrote me and some of them became active participants. Some other persons had heard of the file, or had seen it and also wrote me in support. I had some editorial leeway whether to include their letters in the file or not.

Letters supporting me were very encouraging and contributed heavily to keep me going. Such letters came from all over the United States, and all kinds of professors. They made me feel that my efforts served a broad constituency. For instance, one came from an Assistant Professor in English at a California State College. Several letters came from the Vice President of the National Academy of Sciences, who ultimately joined the campaign actively. One letter came from a professor of Chemistry, who wrote that he had taken a course from me when I was an instructor at Chicago in 1954, and goes on to state: “I did want to send you my appreciation for your article and another chance to learn from you.” One came from a famous member of the academic community, who wrote that my *New York Review* article was “excellent—a worthwhile piece of deflation and correction.” The title of the file was suggested by his letter. Finally, several letters came from university administrators, who expressed appreciation for the public dissemination of criticism of the survey.

Introductory and other comments. In order to make it easier to follow the file, many people have advised me to write a summary of the story, and also a summary of some themes and issues raised in it. The file has the advantage of presenting the raw exchanges, from which anyone can draw his or her own conclusions. The danger in providing other comments is that you may again be presented with a “multiple choice” determined by someone else, instead of making up your mind concerning the positions taken by certain people, giving rise to open-ended possibilities. I have therefore tried to write these additional

comments without placing a priori limits on the issues and themes. I don't want to tell you what to think, although I want to present you with as clear a documentation as possible so that you can form your own judgment.

This letter, the subsequent summary of the story, and the listing of some issues constitute a distortion of the file, against which you have to be warned. You will have to make up your own mind whether what was lost by including such editorial material was properly compensated by gains in making it easier to get into the file. One thing is clear: it is impossible to write *about* the file without distorting it. This is analogous to the Heisenberg Principle which states that the act of measurement alters what is to be measured. I don't want this letter and the following introductory material to be a substitute for the file. Publishers and others have told me that some such material was necessary. Some who have seen preliminary drafts have confirmed that it was useful to them. Ultimately I take responsibility for including it. But I regard this material as dead compared to "the file" itself. The letters come alive in a way which I find much more stimulating, and nothing can replace the context in which they are written, nor the sharpness of their style. Personally, I would prefer that you should not read this introductory material.

Comments concerning how the Ladd-Lipset essay came about will be made in the section on publication of the file. My summary of some themes and issues was written independently of the Ladd-Lipset essay. It seemed inappropriate for me to comment directly on that essay.

I also had to make some editorial decisions how to place all this material, which begins what may be a long series of writings about "The File" (indeed, a new file . . .). Ladd and Lipset were asked where they wanted their essay to be placed: at the beginning or at the end of the book. I followed their desire. The summary of some themes and issues has been placed at the end to minimize the front matter standing between the reader and the file. This summary could be read immediately after "The Story."

Objectivity. I emphasize that never do I claim to be "objective," nor do I reproach someone for not being "objective," with very good reason: I do not understand the meaning of the word "objectivity." I view reality as consisting of events and the various perceptions of these events, which themselves are events. So are relations between these events. I take a relativistic view of each situation. Different people put different emphasis on different matters at different times. Each one makes a choice as to what he or she regards as important, and this choice is necessarily subjective. The choice applies throughout to those points which are worth mentioning, those issues which are worth considering, which issues are regarded as "relevant" or "irrelevant" (the notion is relative to the person doing the regarding, and the time when the regarding takes place).

However, I try to be accurate, I do not fudge the record (at the cost of considerable xeroxing), and I am ready to make corrections if the need arises.

If the file can contribute to making people think independently and clearly, then I shall have achieved my main purpose.

SERGE LANG

The Story

Summary, by Serge Lang

In early spring 1977, I received a questionnaire called “The 1977 Survey of the American Professoriate,” directed by Everett C. Ladd (University of Connecticut) and Seymour Martin Lipset (Stanford University, Hoover Institution). After looking it over, I threw it out. I also threw out a first reminder notice that I had not returned it. Then I read in *New York Review* a commentary by Sigmund Diamond on an article, also by Lipset, concerning some happenings at Harvard in 1954, during the McCarthy period. (The whole exchange, under the name VERITAS AT HARVARD, is reproduced in Appendix IV.) At the same time, I received a second reminder notice.

I knew something of Lipset’s background in sociology, education and politics, and opposed his positions. An understanding of the files does not require any knowledge of this background, and the relevant Lipset positions are appropriately expressed by him in his articles and letters which form part of the file.* Suffice it to say that Lipset has a number of eminent posts, viz: Vice President of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences; member of the editorial board of the Proceedings, National Academy of Sciences; member of the Nominating Committee of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) (elected April 1978); etc.

On the other hand, the questionnaire reminded me of another one, which I had received in 1969, and which was sponsored by the Carnegie Foundation and the American Council on Education (ACE). I had also thrown that one out. After the second reminder notice, I did not feel like making a long analysis of its defects (which seemed obvious to me), but I did write Clark Kerr (Director of the Carnegie Council on Policy Studies in Higher Education), to express my contempt for what he was doing. My letter was never answered. (See Appendix II.)

My brush with the 1969 questionnaire, the appearance of Diamond’s commentary on Lipset’s *Education and Politics at Harvard*, and the fact that Lipset, Clark Kerr and the Carnegie Foundation were involved in all these events triggered me to write a letter to the surveyors expressing my exasperation with their survey. I sent a copy to a friend in the mathematics department at Harvard. When I went there shortly afterward to lecture to a mathematics seminar, I found out that he had shown my letter to others, and that the mathematician Neal Koblitz wanted to give it to the student newspaper, the *Harvard Crimson*. Several mathematicians went to lunch, including an old friend, John Tate. My letter was passed around and discussed, and no one could see any good reason why Koblitz should not give it to the *Crimson*. All agreed “by and large” with the content of the letter. I therefore gave Koblitz the go-ahead.

From this point on, there evolved a substantial controversy about the questionnaire and about the problems to which it gave rise (in numerous areas, e.g. journalism, education, social sciences, etc. as discussed in more detail later on). This gave rise to a frequently sharp exchange of letters.

*See for instance the excerpts from *Political Man* at the end of Part 13; Lipset’s letters in the VERITAS appendix; the excerpts from *Education and Politics at Harvard*, reproduced at the end of Appendix IV; Lipset’s own letters (a list will be found in the index); and of course Appendix I and Appendix II containing Ladd–Lipset articles on the 1977 and 1969 surveys.

The Opening Phase

On 16 April 1977, Lang writes his first letter to the surveyors (Lipset and Co.) “to give vent to his feelings” (cf. letter to Ladd, p. 6.13). Before mailing it, he shows it to several members of the Yale math department. One of them, Roger Howe, now expresses regret for having returned the questionnaire “unreflectingly,” and signs his own statement on the letter. There is a brief correspondence with Lipset concerning both the survey and VERITAS AT HARVARD.

The Harvard *Crimson* reports the controversy. Lipset is quoted to say: “Lang sounds like a crackpot to me.” Lang says: “The questionnaire is stupid from beginning to end. I don’t have time to waste answering questions about something so stupid.”

Most people Lang talks to take a cynical attitude and discount any possibility of disseminating widely the opinions of those who oppose the questionnaire. Lang writes to Diamond and an old friend, Dick Palais, making a few hurried comments on the survey. Lang knew of sociologist Robert Merton at Columbia, “thought rather highly of him,” and had put him on the cc list of the first letter to the surveyors. Lipset writes that Merton was both a consultant and a participant in the survey, contributed questions, and “carefully went over every question.” Lang asks Diamond to show his letter to Merton, and signs off, stating that he hasn’t got the time for a tighter presentation.

Tate writes to Ladd. Lipset answers. Koblitz writes detailed objections to Lipset, who does not answer. The controversy seems ended.

After a dead summer, Koblitz writes a reminder letter. He gets a short condescending put down from Lipset, who tells him to go read the technical literature if he is interested in “pursuing this area in depth.” This incites Lang to write to Merton to ask him, for the record, what was his contribution to “The 1977 Survey” Merton replies that he finds the request for information “for the record” to be “peremptory . . . prosecutory . . . anything but collegial . . . most offensive” Lang writes further to Merton, making the point that he does not see why asking straight questions about who made up the questionnaire and how should be characterized as above. Lang does not view the American Professoriate as a passive object in the hands of sociologists, notably Lipset. Diamond supports Koblitz, who writes to Merton. No answer.

Lang also sends the file to Gina Kolata, reporter for *Science* (official publication of the American Association for the Advancement of Science). No answer from Kolata. The first week of December he goes to the University of Maryland to give a series of lectures in the math department. He contacts other mathematicians about the questionnaire. One of them, J. K. Goldhaber, enters the drama and writes to Lipset and Merton. Lipset answers, Merton does not.

Lang also meets Gina Kolata, who says that she has been busy and has not given attention to the matter. Lang points out that others besides Tate or Koblitz have been objecting to the survey. She says she will look into it. In light of a possible article in *Science*, Lang spends three weeks of his Christmas vacation writing fifteen pages of comments which he sends to his cc list (numbering about 30) on 10 January 1978. The list includes Gina Kolata.

The Chronicle of Higher Education (First Round)

The cc list also includes (for the first time) *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, where Ladd–Lipset have been publishing their series on “results” of the survey, and where they had published a series of 36 articles on the previous 1975 survey. The editors were thus informed of the opposition which had arisen.

Around January 15, Kolata calls the editors, thus informing them also of the pending *Science* article. Senior Editor Malcolm Scully calls Lang in Princeton (where Lang has just gone on leave), and within a week *The Chronicle* comes out with its own “news” story, whose selectivity and inaccuracies are analyzed by Lang in a letter to his cc list. *The Chronicle* emphasized the “political” context, for instance

by quoting Ladd that “Mr. Lang’s charges were essentially political . . . the criticism of Mr. Lipset’s report on Harvard reflected the bitterness of feelings during the McCarthy era.” Although they print Lang’s original letter to the surveyors, they do not mention the 15 pages of comments on the survey. Lang then waits for more evidence of the effect of that story.

This evidence comes rapidly. On 6 March, the editors print three letters. One of them by Manfred Stanley deals negatively with general aspects of survey research and supports Lang. Another is from Herbert Garfinkel, Provost of the University of Nebraska, who complains that Lang has not provided “an analysis directed at such surveys with an eye to revealing inadequacies . . . ,” and who writes of the “vitriolic and personal attack which he [Lang] levels for political reasons. If this is not the nature of ‘McCarthyism,’ the basic charge leveled by Lang at Lipset, then what is?”

On March 29, Lang writes to Garfinkel that his letter is entirely justified on the basis of what *The Chronicle* had printed, but that he is entitled to further facts. Lang sends him the complete file of letters and documents, and asks him for his reaction. By return mail, on April 6, Provost Garfinkel replies: “. . . Truly I much prefer knowing that the views attributed to you by *The Chronicle* misrepresented your statements . . . it would seem most appropriate that your explanation should be printed by *The Chronicle* so that the record will be set straight.” Lang thanks him, but points out that the “explanation” consisted of the entire file, and that even if *The Chronicle* prints an “explanation,” Garfinkel’s public linking of Lang with McCarthyism still stands. No further communication was received from Garfinkel.

Lang places this exchange in the context of making corrections only through letters to the editors, and points to a statement of Hugh Sidey (an editor of *Time*) who had called this practice “sneaky.”

The Chronicle did not print any explanation or correction.

This entire incident illustrates problems in journalism, personal responsibility, editorial responsibility.

Escalation

While on leave at Princeton, Lang contacted President Bowen, then chairman of the American Council on Education, to ask if ACE had anything to do with the 1977 survey. The answer is no. Lipset had written to Tate that the survey was funded principally by the Carnegie Corporation, the Spencer Foundation, and the National Science Foundation. He had also written that it was in large part a “service” one including sections of interest to the National Science Foundation, the National Academy of Sciences, and AAUP. Ladd is quoted to say that the Sloan commission on Higher Education was interested in the survey. Lang writes to these organizations. Every answer contains some reservations about the questionnaire, or acknowledges the seriousness of the criticisms, for instance by stating that they should “receive careful consideration.” Both Carnegie and NSF minimize their contribution. Alan Pifer (President, Carnegie Corporation) calls it “peripheral.” The AAUP eventually stated that no use of the survey was made in policy formulation. A summary of statements from various such letters is contained in Part Seven.

Gina Kolata publishes a news article in *Science*: two full pages on the survey and some of the protest around it, including objections by several social scientists, like Marion Levy (Sociology) who has just met Lang in Princeton.

As a result of the *Science* article, several persons write their support to Lang, including S. E. Luria, Director of the Center for Cancer Research at MIT and Nobel Prize winner in biology.

Ladd had charged in the *Science* article that Lang’s charges are “political.” Lang provides an analysis: *The Lipset File: ‘Political’?*

Some people raise the question whether Lang is waging a “private vendetta.” (Cf. also Lipset’s letter p. 16.11.) Lang writes his “motivation letter” to Goldhaber.

Enter Saunders Mac Lane (Mathematics, University of Chicago; Vice President, National Academy of Sciences), alerted by someone at the NSF in Washington who was on the cc list. Mac Lane investigates support given to the survey by the NAS and NSF. He provides support for Lang, e.g. by finding his

“motivation” letter to Goldhaber “splendid.” He also comments on the Garfinkel incident, which he sees as a “side trail.” He urges Lang to concentrate on what he sees as the “real issues:” first of all the careless way in which these people prepare surveys, plus their lack of judgment in trying to survey things that cannot be treated by this method. The next issue is the “irresponsible action” of the *Chronicle* in printing only one side of the issue and in continuing to print stuff from that Ladd/Lipset survey when there is very substantial criticism of its methods. He also thinks it would be fine if Garfinkel takes the initiative of writing to *The Chronicle* to correct his letter, but thinks that “this would take both initiative and some very uncommon courage.” Lang does not completely share Mac Lane’s point of view concerning the relative importance of the Garfinkel letter. Cf. Lang’s letters to the cc list, 3 May 1979 and October 1979.

Ladd–Lipset articles have appeared almost once a week in *The Chronicle* since 3 October 1977, but the series (as was realized only much later) is interrupted on 13 February 1978 after only 12 pieces, one month after *The Chronicle* received Lang’s comments, and after the *Science* article. No information as to whose decision this was (Ladd–Lipset, *The Chronicle*, a combination) is available. According to Ladd–Lipset’s cover letter for the 1977 survey, *The Chronicle* had published 36 pieces on the 1975 survey.

Despite having discontinued the series, *The Chronicle* prints *twice* a letter from a PhD in Education at the University of Minnesota, who wrote his thesis using the Ladd–Lipset survey, and thinks one of the interests of the survey is “its potential to generate future research.”

Reports on the Ladd–Lipset survey appear in the press at large, e.g. *Newsweek*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Stanford Campus Report*, *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, etc. and are communicated to the cc list.

Lang submits an appropriately updated and edited version of his Comments for publication in *Science*. They are rejected by the editor, despite the support of six eminent scientists. *New York Review* offers to publish, and Lang prepares an updated version for publication in that journal.

The New York Review Article

Lang’s article on the survey appears in *New York Review of Books*, end of April 1978.

Since the opening shots, there had not been a single communication directly from Ladd to Lang. Successively, he had told the *Crimson*: “Professor Lang’s letter is one long string of epithets. When and if he ever has an intellectual point to make, I will be more than happy to respond to it;” he characterized the charges as “political” both in *The Chronicle* and in *Science*; he told *Science* that “he had never received a letter addressed to him,” even though he was a charter member of the cc list, and Tate had addressed his letter specifically to Ladd. Immediately after the publication of the NYR article, Ladd writes to Lang, acknowledging that he had “received a fair number of comments from [Lang] over the past year,” and addressing himself to what he calls “the larger concerns.” He offers “cooperation” rather than “confrontation.” Lang answers for the record, and then leaves for his usual summer travels and lecturing. Once more, the story seems to end at this point, and Lang writes to his cc list that he expects no further mailings.

This was not to be.

After Lang has left, the Staff Director of the Sloan Commission, Carl Kaysen, writes to confirm the interest of that Commission in the survey and a future one. He writes that he marked the fourth draft of a new survey to take into account the points Lang made, giving “careful consideration” to Lang’s “comments.”

The summer of 1978 also sees the following developments.

On June 13, Mac Lane writes that COSPUP (Committee on Scientific and Public Policy of the National Academy of Sciences) discussed surveys, and the Ladd–Lipset one in particular, at its June meeting. COSPUP is supposed to look further into the question, but there was no follow up on this as far as Lang knows.

Mac Lane also writes to the editors of *The Chronicle* to ask them to reprint Lang's *New York Review* article. No answer.

Edward Fiske, Education Editor of the *New York Times*, reports on the survey uncritically, without mentioning the *Science* or the NYR article. Marion Levy contacts Fiske to bring these to his attention. Lang puts Fiske on the cc list.

Several people write in praise and support of the NYR article. One of them, Herbert Schiller (Communications, U of C, San Diego), writes that what Lang has revealed in this particular case is representative of a substantial number of survey studies. Six months later, Schiller was to write that the file has produced a "truly amazing record of the web of control in our education establishment. The combination of power, bureaucracy, and conservatism are nowhere better displayed than in the file." He also writes that if Lang can get the file published, he will recommend it as required reading in his course on the political economy of mass communications.

Aaron Cicourel (Sociology, U of C, San Diego) writes that Lang's remarks are "important and have implications that go considerably beyond the immediate study that you discussed." He asks for permission to use Lang's article in future classes.

Laurence Veysey (History, U of C, Santa Cruz) writes a letter to the editors of NYR severely critical of Ladd-Lipset. He finds in Lang's article "suggestions that the very effort to gain a representative impression of professional attitudes on matters other than those having to do with concrete academic policies is somehow impertinent," and he objects. Lang replies that he did not think one could find such suggestions, and that he deals in concrete instances. This is an important exchange for those interested in the formulation of generalizations.

Trying to Settle Loose Ends

The Chronicle of Higher Education (Second Round)

On 11 September 1978, Lang writes to Geno Ballotti, a member of the Board of Governors of the *Chronicle*, to ask them to take action to get the record straight in that publication. Among other things, he mentions Mac Lane's letter to the editors, unanswered and unpublished. A few days later, Mac Lane gets an answer—negative. A copy was sent to Lang only much later, and can be found p.15.24

Mr. Ballotti answers that he hopes to bring up the serious questions raised by Lang at the next meeting of the Board, and hopes to give some answer by November 6. Nothing ever was to come of this and no further letter from Mr. Ballotti or from the Board of Governors was received.

Mary Bass, Vice Chancellor for Legal Affairs of City University of New York writes a letter to the editors of *The Chronicle* to complain about the "blackout of criticism" of the Ladd-Lipset survey, and their not mentioning Lang's "Comments" of January, nor taking into account the published version in *New York Review*.

The Chronicle prints Mary Bass's letter, and three weeks later, on 20 November 1978, prints, not the NYR article, but the January draft, undated and out of context. They do not state that this was done on the responsibility of the editors and that Lang was not consulted or informed of this publication. This creates misrepresentations in the record: first, the January draft had been edited and polished for publication; and second, the meaning and validity of several items were seriously affected by the time difference. These items concern the size of the protest against the survey, its funding, and its use. In the intervening months, Lang gathered systematic information which he communicated to the cc list as it became available, and incorporated in the published article. The absence of this information in the publication by *The Chronicle* on November 20 was seriously misleading.

The Chronicle also printed the letter which Ladd had written to Lang after the NYR article, but labeled it