

THE MAIL BAG

'Viewpoint' Economists

To the Editor:

I read with interest the column by Sylvia Porter on the "Era of the Economist." She speaks most glowingly and, I suppose, hopefully of the growth in numbers from a Fortune estimate of less than 5000 25 years ago to over 13,000 today. She tells us that "Today, there are over 7000 economists, mathematicians and statisticians in the federal government alone—and many hold crucial jobs."

She says: "The rise of the Economists in business, labor and agriculture, moreover, dwarfs his advance in government" and that "What we have witnessed has been a revolution in economics—in the science itself and in the part played by its professionals. As Fortune puts it, 'The practicing economist is the newest arrival in the executive suite.'"

With this news one hardly knows whether to sing "God Bless America," or to make the words read, "God Save America." Other sciences are quite objective because of the nature of their study and because there is no great body of opinion of mankind who have a financial concern in their findings in a sense they would twist the findings to personal interests.

Economics as taught today in colleges and universities might well be called "viewpoint" economics. "Whose viewpoints" do you wear today might be asked of economists "in practice," though not all, of course. The name "economist" is not under copyright and it can be hung on anyone using the words land, labor and capital—and, possibly, the words supply and demand. From the same college, the same class, the same professor and the same textbook will come economists with "viewpoints" for — "Labor", for "Capital", for "Farmers", for "Real Estate", for "Republicans", for "Democrats", for "Socialists", for "Communists," and the like. While there can be endless "viewpoints" there can be but one science—and science has no "viewpoints." Does Miss Porter suspect from what we "have witnessed" that we have achieved a free, objective science; or that there is hope that we will?

Man needs good government, and if the freedom and dignity of man is a consideration, this means less regimentation for man and less government. If we were under the guidance of a free economic science we would have limited government for then we could take care of ourselves. After all people called "Communies" are only new-comers at the "art"

Good government means a good public revenue system and a good public revenue system means limited government and more 'free' people. Would anyone venture to say we have that today? Many will suppose "out loud" that maybe it is the best we can have—kind, gentle and naive souls. But there is one thing certain: If a science of economics is ever taught in colleges and universities the approach to the problem of public revenue will not be "what's the style in taxes today?" but rather it will be one of basic economic science sources; and this is as true as saying when engineers consider a water system to be built they will certainly consider source—direct and right up to the horse's mouth, and not merely kinds of pumps, how many and where in the system they are to be put.

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