

Letters

On Jamie Whitten

The article on Representative Whitten by Nick Kotz ["Jamie Whitten: The Permanent Secretary of Agriculture," October, 1969] points precisely to the purpose for your magazine. I wrote to Representative Whitten minutes after having finished the article.

In my work with both the poverty program and domestic nutrition issues, I have seen the need for rethinking food policies. I have sensed for some time a real confusion about where federal decisions are made.

The article has pierced the protective covering surrounding the mechanisms which make policy on malnutrition in the U.S., mechanisms so well established that they may threaten the entire system of checks and balances.

It is therefore increasingly evident that the only way to bring change is through the same kind of pressure that has begun to bring rethinking to another area of questionable policy. Through efforts like that of your magazine, I suggested to Representative Whitten, he may in the near future be put under heat comparable to that which our Vietnam policy makers are feeling. Now is the time for him to begin to alter his public position.

JOHN W. FRANKLIN, JR.
Washington, D.C.

Mr. Franklin is with the American Technical Assistance Corporation.

by then-Governor Brown. The measure was adopted in response to strong public pressures for reform in the way California school districts were organized. At that time, the State had more than 1,500 separate and more-or-less independent school districts, ranging from the 600,000-student Los Angeles City Unified School District to numerous tiny and over-financed districts in mountainous areas, with as few as six students.

Invariably, the very small districts were located in areas of immensely high property values, while the larger urban and suburban districts had a much lower tax base. The Indian Springs School District in Shasta County, for example, had \$500,000 in assessed property value to support each of its school children, while the Willowbrook District in Watts in Los Angeles enjoyed a tax base of less than \$2,000 per child. Resolution of these great inequities so that each California school child had a relatively equal amount of tax dollars behind his education was a principal reason for the 1964 Unruh Act.

The law would not have been very effective, however, had it not contained financial rewards for school districts voluntarily agreeing to merge, with the approval of state authorities. After five years under the statute, complete success in reducing financial and educational inequities cannot be reported, but we have reduced the total number of independent school districts in California from 1,500 to about 1,100 and many underfinanced units have become unified with their wealthier neighbors, thus evening out the tax load, broadening educational opportunity for many children, and creating stronger units of local government for many of our public schools.

JESS UNRUH
Sacramento, California

Mr. Unruh is the Democratic Leader of the California Assembly.

Equalizing Education

I enjoyed your article, "The Impotent School Board," contained in your September, 1969, issue. The California legislation which bears my name, mentioned on page 50, was passed in 1964 and signed into law

Doctors and Diplomaism

David Hapgood's basic thesis that Diplomaism has become an American obsession which restricts career development is unarguable. Almost everything else in the series, however, is incorrect, exaggerated,

or just plain unwise.

I shall restrict my comments to the field I know best, medicine, after pointing out that Hapgood is incorrect when he says that "most studies show high school drop-outs to be as smart if not smarter than those who stay inside the walls" (most studies show the exact opposite).

Writing of medicine, Hapgood ignores the entire sociology of the professions and, in fact, appears ignorant of the difference between the professions and other occupations, a matter which, far from being irrelevant or a matter of semantics, has occupied such men as Everett Hughes, Harold Laski, and Alfred North Whitehead. If "diplomaism" is to be fought, both the author and his readers should be aware of the very real non-economic forces involved. Hapgood's assertion that "the AMA and such specialty boards as the American College of Surgeons...hold sway over lesser craft guilds" simplifies a complex issue to the point of parody. In fact, the "lesser guilds," quite probably because they are "lesser" in prestige and thus more nervous about their status, are extremely anxious lest physicians sell out their territory to "unqualified" newcomers. Thus when the New York Medical Society recently opposed a six-year course for optometrists, contending that a fully competent optometrist can be prepared with three or four years beyond high school," the optometrists replied that the medical society had no right to suggest standards for other professions.

Mr. Hapgood's conspiratorial turn of mind leads him to see the Flexner Report of 1910 as primarily a way for the AMA to get "a stranglehold on the supply of doctors." Once again he ignores both social and medical history. The Flexner Report was hardly greeted with unanimous approval by the AMA, for the "reactionary" elements in the society at that time saw it as government interference with medical practice. The liberal, enlightened elements in both medicine and journalism fought to protect the consumer by getting a hundred or so "bucket shops" closed down. Hapgood's pious injunction that somehow the AMA in the post-1910 decade should have "improved doctors' training while keeping up the supply" ignores the fact that the Flexner Re-

port urged that medical schools be part of a university complex, that they have strong full-time paid faculties, and that research facilities be part of the student's education. The medical schools that survived the Flexner Report struggled manfully to improve doctors' training, but to have kept up the supply would have been equivalent to changing your local barber college to the equal of Amherst. How could the supply have been kept up in Missouri and Tennessee, which had 14 and 10 medical schools respectively?

Hapgood writes of "the increasingly desperate struggle for admission" to medical school. This is not true. The ratio of applicants to places available has been about the same for the past four years, and is significantly better than in the 1950's. In 1967-68 18,724 young men and women submitted applications to American medical schools, and 9,702 were accepted. This 2:1 ratio compares favorably with that of 1950-55, when it hovered around 4:1 and, of course, is nowhere near the 30:1 odds suggested by the figure that Hapgood cites for a single prestigious medical school.

Hapgood is correct, I believe, when he deplors the diversion of medical students from patient care into research. Again, however, ignorance or naiveté leads him into blaming the AMA for doing "nothing effective to prevent the gradual disappearance of the general practitioner." Only someone incredibly ignorant of the edgy relationship between the AMA and the specialty societies could write such a sentence. The AMA has always been the stronghold of the general practitioner—quite obviously, for each new specialty society diverted its members' prime fealty from the AMA to the American College of Surgeons or whatever. The fact that the AMA has not been able to reverse this trend (despite all its editorials and experiments in Family Medicine residencies) proves, first, that the AMA does not have the power Mr. Hapgood and others think it does, and, second, that the trend stems from deep forces in American society (and medicine) and can not be turned around by fiat.

Hapgood also manages to overlook the deep-seated suspicion between the AMA and the medical schools themselves on this and other issues. It is true that until recently

many medical schools and teaching hospitals (including the Massachusetts General of the now-canonized Dr. Knowles) have concentrated on turning out researchers. Through the same years the AMA has been deploring the trend to specialization and the over-emphasis on research. Neither the medical school faculties (often politically "liberal") nor their organization (the American Association of Medical Colleges) have been in much sympathy with the AMA on this issue. The conflict has had all the aspects of town v. gown, East v. Midwest, liberal v. conservative.

Mr. Hapgood quotes someone as saying, "There are good men in the industry (medicine). You don't hear about them because they keep quiet. They're afraid of getting caught." Neither I nor my colleagues need compliments from Mr. Hapgood or Mr. Lesh. We will not accept their labels of "He's good, for a doctor," any more than we would "He's good, for a Jew."

Lastly, I would direct the attention of your readers to the remedies that Mr. Hapgood suggests. "Denuded of the academic fig leaf, we would all have to examine ourselves—and be examined by others." Mr. Hapgood wants to kill "diplomaism," and in its place substitute "examism." Anyone who knows anything about the "eleven-plus" in England or the "baca" in France will start to shiver when he thinks about how, in Mr. Hapgood's world, we would all be examining one another. Don't think that the ETS up in Princeton wouldn't be ready with a whole set of scientifically-designed exams for everyone from baby-sitters to retinal surgeons. Don't think that the exams wouldn't become encoded and encrusted the way the formal academic requirements have. Don't think that corruption, frustration, and error won't abound in a system where "we would all have to examine ourselves—and be examined by others." Of course if any such system were instituted, we could count on Mr. Hapgood to come along and write a bitter article denouncing it as anti-human, anti-intellectual—which it would be.

As I said, Hapgood's basic point is valid. Diplomas and formal educational requirements have too often become a substitute for real knowledge. There is, however, some-

thing to be said for formal training in any academic discipline—exams can not substitute for systematic exposure to basic theory and to factual material which may never appear on an exam. As a sometime freelance journalist, I am well aware that this occupation has no formal standards for training, research, or accuracy. One sometimes wishes it did....

MICHAEL J. HALBERSTAM, M.D.
Washington, D.C.

Schlesinger vs. McCarthy

What is to be done about Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.? [*The Year of the People* was reviewed by Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., in November] Spiro T. Agnew suggests that the networks should control the manipulation of the news by the commentators—a dangerous direction for anybody to take. We must stand on principle here and defend the freedom of the pen. But a moment of indulgence would be sweet. One longs to seize and destroy that bottle of vitriol Mr. Schlesinger keeps handy whenever he goes to work on Eugene McCarthy. Could one give him Parker's washable blue?

How much longer will the Kennedy courtiers continue to make Eugene McCarthy the scapegoat for their guilt, their compromise on the issues of 1968, their bitter knowledge that the techniques of the Kennedy campaign were indefensible? Indeed, they bear a heavy burden. Who can compute their share of the blame that the issues of 1968 are still with us and will be until 1972? Robert Kennedy's memory would be better served if these people could face the psychological and political facts which the rest of us are forced to confront.

I find Mr. McCarthy's book enormously instructive. It is cool, detached, and revolutionary. The younger generation ought to be grateful for the absence of bombast, spurious panaceas, and phony rhetoric. It is a primer for old and young on the faults of the old politics. What can be more useful in these times when the young are something to be conjured with in the new politics. Or doesn't Mr. Schlesinger know that?

MRS. PERCY H. WOOD, JR.
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Biafra and the Foreign Service

How can someone outside of the Department of State who has no direct knowledge of the "inside" details of its current activities evaluate the conflicting accounts of the Foreign Service given by Mr. Bell ["The Cost of Cowardice: Silence in the Foreign Service," July, 1969] and by Ambassador Crockett ["An Ambassador's Rebuttal," November, 1969]? I think we have only two ways: (1) Evaluate past cases for which we do have these details; and (2) evaluate current results in terms of current State Department policies.

(1) We now have sufficient details of the State Department and Foreign Service performance before and during WWII with respect to the Nazi extermination of 6,000,000 Jews to be able to assess State's performance at that time. This information proves fairly conclusively that the Foreign Service at that time operated much more in accordance with Mr. Bell's current analysis than Ambassador Crockett's. State and the Foreign Service did its best to obstruct attempts to save Jews from extermination, cooperating (when forced to do so) grudgingly, belatedly, and on the whole inadequately. (See, for instance, Arthur D. Morse's account in *While Six Million Died* of the deliberate eight-month State Department delay in authorizing relief for the Jews of France and Rumania, and his account of the "play it safe" rejections of visa requests by the U.S. Consul in Rotterdam, on the asinine grounds that these people, many M.D.'s, some with wealthy relatives in the U.S., were "likely to become public charges"! Some of the excerpts presented by Morse from the early 1944 U.S. Treasury Department's eighteen-page indictment of the State Department careerists responsible for our "acquiescence ... in the murder of the Jews" are as damning of State Department personnel as anything could be.)

(2) But it will no doubt be claimed that the '30's and '40's were a long time ago, and things have radically changed. But have they? Rather than point to Vietnam, or any of the by now overly familiar examples of State Department and Foreign Service failures, let me refer to a current case which runs so frighteningly parallel to the WWII failure of State Department careerists to save the Jews of Europe that one seems

driven to the conclusion that today's Foreign Service officers are not much different than their counterparts of the '30's and '40's.

I refer to their failure for the past year or so to make any serious attempt to save 2,000,000 Biafrans, mostly children, who have been starved to death by the Nigerians. (The Nigerians are now working on their third million, but State still professes an impotent neutrality, refusing even to recommend that the matter be brought before the U.N.)

This failure to act effectively stems directly from the faulty information and advice given by the Foreign Service, which resulted in the State Department's adoption of a "One Nigeria" policy. This policy, originally promoted by important Foreign Service officers (e.g., Joseph Palmer II), seems certain to continue *no matter how many African lives it costs*. It is as though, once a policy is adopted, the whole vast organization then moves with the single purpose of supporting that policy, just as one would expect on Mr. Bell's analysis. (Of course, the fact that this policy is thought—erroneously—to be in the economic interests of major oil companies, chiefly British, makes it just that much harder to overthrow.)

Thus, the Biafra tragedy presents us with a current example of Foreign Service and State Department blindness as to what really is going on in the world, coupled with a kind of value blindness. (Even if "One Nigeria" were otherwise a good thing, how could it possibly be worth millions of lives and a country in chaos?)

Mr. Bell's account of what goes on in the Foreign Service offers an at least plausible explanation of Foreign Service failures of this kind. For instance, it offers a plausible explanation of the State Department's refusal to change its Nigeria/Biafra policy long after it should have become clear to everyone that that policy is incorrect. But one wonders, after reading Ambassador Crockett's account, how such a well-run organization could have been so wrong and so ineffective so often. Would Ambassador Crockett care to enlighten us on that score?

HOWARD KAHANE
Lawrence, Kansas

Mr. Kahane is Associate Professor of Philosophy at the University of Kansas.

Compulsory Politics

"The Shakedown Cruise" by Jerry Landauer in your October issue is excellent. It does a fine job of exposing a common and odious practice—the use of forced dues for political purposes. The next step, however, should be to analyze what could be done to solve the problem. The answer is simple: make union membership voluntary and let the workers "vote" with their feet.

By the way, the use of compulsory dues for political purposes is not limited to the SIU. It is standard practice among trade unions. As Victor Riesel pointed out last fall, the AFL-CIO alone spent \$60 million to defeat a candidate they termed a "disaster"—yet only 57% of the "union vote," according to a Gallup Poll, went to Mr. Humphrey.

This point was best analyzed by Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas when he wrote in 1961, "It may be said that the election of a Franklin D. Roosevelt rather than a Calvin Coolidge might be the best possible way to serve the cause of collective bargaining. But even such a selective use of union funds for political purposes subordinates the individual's First Amendment rights to the views of the majority. I do not see how that can be done, even though the objector retains his rights to campaign, to speak, to vote as he chooses. For when union funds are used for that purpose, the individual is required to finance political projects against which he may be in rebellion."

The National Right to Work Committee has urged Congress, in testimony before the Senate Finance Committee, to take a step toward solving this problem by removing the tax-exempt status of any organization (union, Chamber et al) which thus uses compulsory dues for political purposes.

HUGH C. NEWTON
Washington, D.C.

Mr. Newton is Director of Information of the National Right to Work Committee.

Older Americans

I am sure that the author of the excellent piece, "The Burnt-Out and The Bored," in

the September issue would agree that he dealt with only one aspect of the whole complex problem of the aging in America.

Lack of income is, of course, the fundamental and overriding issue. Although Dr. Butler focused principally on the difficulties of the professional older person to whom money is apt to be less of a controlling matter, he still understates the role that money plays.

Having lived in a very intimate way for several years now with pretty much all sides of this question of the needs of the older American, it is my view that enlisting seniors in a militant, multi-purpose, self-organization is the greatest single need of the moment.

In the difficult fight for Medicare, observation forced me to the conclusion that large numbers of elderly persons who engaged in this effort gained just about as much by having become active in a demanding cause as they finally did by the dollars-and-cents (as well as psychological) satisfaction that was achieved by Medicare itself.

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Washington, D.C.

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Polish Hill

Monroe W. Karmin ["Polish Hill: the White Ethnic's Complaint," August, 1969] relates the rejection of several applicants recommended by Polish Hill citizens. This same thing happened to applicants in predominantly black sections of the Pittsburgh Model City neighborhood. In a very controversial action, a black candidate for another section of the Model Cities neighborhood was turned down because of potential conflict of interest. Others were rejected because of lack of qualifications. All of the black area directors, like the white Polish Hill area director, are not residents of the Model City neighborhood. This was done reluctantly because qualified applicants for this position were not available in the neighborhood (though neighborhood residents filled many other positions).

All of the selecting and rejecting was

done by a personnel committee of citizens.

The real and tragic truth is that the Polish Hill citizenry would grant only a subservient voice to the Negroes in their area. They had to be required to bring Negro citizens into the meetings before they could participate any further.

Polish Hill citizens will say that they were crushed by "Black Power," as Mr. Karmin writes. Not so.

The black citizens of the Model Cities area took a most reasonable position toward their Polish brothers. The conduct of the Polish Hill citizens was a mixture of prejudice, stupidity and pettiness. The reasonable voices in the neighborhood failed to prevail.

Perhaps the new ethnic confederations will help to give better leadership to communities like Polish Hill. I certainly hope so.

REV. DONALD W. McILVANE
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Fewer Structures

Josiah Auspitz's review of Peter Drucker's book *The Age of Discontinuity* [in the November, 1969, issue] and the hope it proffers is unrealistic. Republicans cannot provide new structures by replacing one bureaucracy with another any more than Democrats can do so by simply adding more. Fewer, rather than more, structures standing between the people, their needs and their government are what is needed. The self-perpetuating government bureaucracy is indeed a basic evil, but public subsidy of private organizations creates the identical problem—regardless of the profit motive's entering into the situation and providing incentives; the initial problem is the germination of private interest where the public interest should prevail. There are no simple panaceas to separate power from corruption, but the profit motive, be it ever so much the American Way and the answer to production problems, is indeed part of the problem rather than the answer to good government.

JAN SAENGER
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During 1969,

The Washington Monthly

has been pleased to publish for its readers sections or adaptations from the following books prior to their actual publication in book form:

The Politics of Schools: A Crisis in Self-Government, by Robert Bendiner, Harper & Row

Diplomatism in America, by David Haggood, Pegasus (1970)

Exit, Voice & Loyalty, by Albert O. Hirschman, Harvard University Press (1970)

The Economy of Cities, by Jane Jacobs, Random House

The Regulators, by Louis M. Kohlmeier, Harper & Row

Let Them Eat Promises: The Politics of Hunger in America, by Nick Kotz, Prentice-Hall, Inc.

The Ultimate Folly, by Congressman Richard McCarthy, Alfred A. Knopf

The Oppenheimer Case: Security on Trial, by Philip M. Stern, Harper & Row

Can We Survive

No one can escape the enormous fact that California has changed. What was once desert has become the most productive land in the world. The once-lonely mountain tops are crisscrossed with humming power lines. Powerful industries, from old ones like steel to the most modern aerospace and electronic operations, have been built. California has become one of the most fruitful, one of the richest places on the surface of the earth. This is all change, and it is good.

But there are other changes in California. Its vigorous growth has been achieved by many men and women who came to give their children a healthy place to live. Now, however, when school children in Los Angeles run out to the playing fields, they are confronted by the warning: "Do not exercise stren-

uously or breathe too deeply during heavy smog conditions." For the sunshine that once bathed the land in golden light has been blotted out by deadly smog. In a number of California towns the water supplies now contain levels of nitrate above the limit recommended by the U.S. Public Health Service; given to infants, nitrate can cause a fatal disorder, methemoglobinemia, and pediatricians have recommended the use of bottled water for infant formulas. The natural resources of California, once a magnet that attracted thousands who sought a good life, now harbor threats to health. Beaches that once sparkled in the sun are polluted with oil and foul-smelling deposits. Rivers that once teemed with fish run sluggishly to the sea. The once famous crabs in San Francisco Bay are dying. Redwoods are top-

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