

# Letters

## Business and Politics

To the Editor:

As a political scientist who teaches at a business school and who has been writing about business-government relations for more than a decade, I would like to express my disappointment with David Menninger's article, "Political Science and the Corporation" (*PS*, Spring 1985, pp. 206-212). In my judgment, this piece contributes little to the ability of political scientists to explore the political significance of the corporation.

The central problem with Menninger's argument is that he takes for granted precisely those dimensions of corporate power whose existence is in fact most problematic. Menninger's analysis reflects his personal political biases rather than his familiarity with the extension scholarship on the political role of the corporation.

For example, he writes, "employees are ruled by supervisors and managers, stockholders' assets are ruled by corporate directors, customers and suppliers are ruled by an industrial sector's entrenched giants" (italics added). Each clause in this sentence is incorrect. In fact, corporate personnel policies are constrained by a whole series of statutes and judicial decisions that encompass areas ranging from discrimination to pension rights and occupational health. The assertions that stockholder assets are "ruled" by corporate directors betrays a remarkable ignorance of existing literature on corporate governance and corporate law—let alone the contemporary increase in the success rate of stockholder suits and hostile takeovers! The notion that America's "corporate giants" are "entrenched" is about a decade out of date. It overlooks both the significant increase in the percentage of American

firms that face competition from imports as well as the entrepreneurial explosion—currently running at the rate of 600,000 new companies a year—which is undermining the market position of established firms in a large number of sectors.

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*Is TVA really more accountable than Con Ed? Is the Pentagon more subject to public rule than General Dynamics?*

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To suggest that "individuals seem to have little choice about accepting or rejecting (corporate rule) in a meaningful fashion" overlooks the numerous political challenges to corporate prerogatives that emerged during the 1970s. Has Menninger ever heard of Ralph Nader or the Sierra Club? The dramatic increase in corporate PACs since the mid-seventies, documented in the article in *PS* following Menninger's, represents in large measure a response to the numerous political setbacks experienced by business during the first half of the 1970s at the hands of the public interest movement. I would refer Menninger to my article, "The Power of Business in America: A Reappraisal," published in *The British Journal of Political Science*, January 1983.

In the next paragraph, we are informed that, "countervailing forces such as government regulation . . . are insignificant checks to corporate power when compared to the regular and intensive review which public rule must subject itself." This statement at least has the virtue that it might conceivably be true, though I would welcome some evidence. Is TVA really more accountable than Con Ed? Is the Pentagon more subject to public rule than General Dynamics? In any event,

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the veracity of this statement certainly is not self-evident.

Underlying Menninger's entire discussion of corporate power is his assumption that the power of business is linked to the "large corporation's concentration of resources and wealth." But this is by no means obvious. There are a number of extremely powerful industries which contain relatively few large companies; the milk producers cooperatives are the most obvious example and within the oil industry, the independent producers have been far more powerful than the far larger integrated majors. There is in fact an extensive literature on this topic with which Menninger displays no familiarity.

Certainly the corporation poses a number of challenges for democratic politics and political scientists would do well to study its political significance far more extensively, and intensively, than they have done up to now. Robert Dahl made this argument three decades ago and it is equally valid today. Such a research agenda, however, is scarcely promoted by pre-judging its conclusions.

David Vogel  
University of California, Berkeley

### Menninger replies:

David Vogel's letter focuses almost exclusively on the first half of my article and the characterization of the corporation that I believe reflects the perceptions of most political scientists today, but which he believes reflects solely my prejudices. Some of the elements of this characterization I do happen to accept as true; other elements I am not so sure about. However, since my purpose was *not* to give my analysis of the corporation, but to get other political scientists to think about their analysis, I stated as bluntly as I could a conceptual "ideal type" of the corporation as a problem for democratic society that needs more systematic and rigorous study from the discipline than it has been getting thus far.

I intended (or I should say hoped) that I would be just provocative enough in this characterization to get my readers to go on to consideration of the proposals for

further research which I present in the article's second half, along with my concluding implication that the results of this research should *not* be prejudged. I regret that this is the half of the article which Professor Vogel virtually ignores, since I am sure that I would have profited much more from hearing about his own research agenda items than I have from his presumptions about my personal political biases.

The questions Professor Vogel raises in objection to my characterization of the corporation are certainly legitimate, but his implied answers do not strike me as sufficient to close the books on any major issues about the power and influence of the corporation. For example, statutes and judicial decisions intending to constrain corporate personnel policies may have their practical effects limited by corporate discretion in their interpretation and application. Stockholders' short-term gain from take-over battles may be compromised in the long term because of excessive borrowing employed by both corporate raiders *and* defenders—a mortgaging of stockholder assets by management that is mushrooming despite the formalities of corporate governance or corporate law. The threat of foreign competition or entrepreneurialism to the market position of established firms may be softened by protectionist legislation and the high rate of failure among small businesses starved for capital. The significance to American politics of Ralph Nader or the Sierra Club may depend on whether the consumer or environmental movements of the 70s have managed to produce a corporate economy in the 80s that exercises more social responsibility than it did before—and is *perceived* to do so by the public at large. And the electoral vulnerability of politicians who happen to be in office during bad economic times as compared to the relative legal immunity of managers whose companies are found to have broken the law may be more relevant to the issue of accountability than comparing utility companies or two components of the same military-industrial complex.

Professor Vogel may see only more hostility toward the corporation in these suggestions, but I still must insist that they

point to valid problems for further research by political scientists which is necessary to understand more fully and dispassionately the relationship between corporate capitalism and democratic politics. As it stands now, and as I attempt to show in my article, that relationship would be described by numerous political scientists in terms much less sanguine than those suggested by Professor Vogel. I would refer Professor Vogel back to Robert Dahl, for example, who has stated most recently in *A Preface to Economic Democracy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), his own conviction "that both corporate capitalism and bureaucratic socialism tend to produce inequalities in social and economic resources so great as to bring about severe violations of political equality and hence of the democratic process, and that we ought to consider whether an alternative more congenial to democratic values might not be found" (p. 60).

I quote Dahl not to chasten Vogel, but to demonstrate once again what I see as a prevailing point of view in the discipline towards the modern corporation, regardless of any exceptions taken to it by Vogel and others. Whether it is the right point of view is, I believe, another question altogether, for which the answer has not yet been made clear. My suggestion to David Vogel is that it won't be made clear until it can be addressed without prepossessions of any sort.

David Menninger  
University of California, Los Angeles

## Humanities and Political Science

I read with some astonishment the report on "Political Science and the Humanities" published in the Spring, 1985 issue of *PS* (pp. 247-259). This chirpy account of the state of our discipline goes against many of my personal impressions, gleaned over the past 30 years. I had thought that our discipline was intellectually incoherent in the extreme and completely lacking an intellectual center. You can imagine, therefore, how pleased I am to learn that all is well after all, and

that the love for the humanities is what binds all political scientists together.

I was especially gratified to learn that what the authors call "classical" political theory

continues to define many of the fundamental problems, phrase the critical questions, and provide the crucial concepts that inform and directly or indirectly guide scholarship in political science, including that which is the most self-consciously scientific. Analyses of voting behavior, sample surveys, and aggregate data relating to categories of political systems as well as studies of implementation of public policy can be recognized as almost always addressing matters that were first identified as significant in classical political theory.

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Assuming that the authors are here referring to the recognized "classics" of political theory—i.e., principally the major works of Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Aquinas, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Hegel, Mill and Marx—their statement will come as news indeed to those of us who teach and write about these books. I eagerly await documentation for their assertion that "analyses of voting behavior, sample surveys and aggregate data relating to categories of political systems" are "almost always" addressing matters "first identified" in classical political theory.

Where in the *Republic* is the need for "sample surveys" to be found? Where in *The Philosophy of Right* does one hear a call for "aggregate data" on the categories of political systems'? Where in Hobbes' *Leviathan* is the need for "analyses of voting behavior" identified?

Alas, the above quotation, together with numerous others, suggests to me that the authors of the report either have not read "classical" political theory, or if they have they have utterly misunder-

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stood it, or if they have understood it they have allowed themselves, formed into committee, to produce a bunch of hokum, in order to convince the present administration of the National Endowment for the Humanities to give more grants to political scientists. I prefer the third explanation.

Dante Germino  
University of Virginia

### The committee replies:

As the big bird of the APSA's liaison committee with NEH, I suppose Professor Dante Germino's letter falls within my nest. He begins with the statement that he perceives incoherence within political science. I see no reason to doubt that one who read our report in the careless manner that he has would find incoherence anywhere—or even everywhere.

Our report does not claim that political scientists are linked into one, neat, happy discipline. Rather, the committee operated on the premise that we are a pluralistic discipline. Indeed, the report speaks of political science "becoming a complicated conversation among scientific and humanistic approaches, to the benefit of both" (p. 248). Many of us share concerns for values that we, as well as scholars in other disciplines, believe to be humanistic. We tried to identify some of the fields outside the more obvious areas of political philosophy and jurisprudence where humanistically oriented scholarship is being produced.

In his final paragraph, Professor Germino offers three explanations for our disagreeing with him: *First*, we have not read "classical" political theory. I suspect that we have all done so. For myself, I can only add that I did so in a rather intense manner under Professor Leo Strauss. *Second*, we do not understand classical political theory. It is surely possible that this criticism is correct, just as it is possible that it is Professor Germino who lacks understanding. We thought that theorists like Plato, Aristotle, Hobbes, and Locke were concerned with problems such as "community, justice, law, legitimacy, freedom, equality, and persuasion"—in sum with citizen-

ship and statecraft (p. 247). We also thought that many contemporary political scientists, though using different methodologies and often arriving at different conclusions, were also pursuing those concerns. We may be wrong in either or both analyses, but it will take more than an *ipse dixit* based on careless—and thoughtless—reading to convince me.

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*Such a claim [that the committee tried to sell its integrity] is false as well as malicious. It is unworthy of a person who claims membership in a community of scholars.*

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Professor Germino's *third* explanation for our sin of coherence—and the one he prefers—is that the committee tried to sell its integrity to NEH in exchange for increased grants to political science. Such a claim is false as well as malicious. It is unworthy of a person who claims membership in a community of scholars. I would not dignify it by further response.

Walter F. Murphy  
Princeton University

This is in response to Dante Germino's vituperative and ill-tempered letter of June 11, in which he attacks the APSA report on political science and the humanities that you published in the Spring 1985 issue of *PS*, and of which I am an author.

In his letter Professor Germino quotes mockingly from a paragraph of the report that deals with political philosophy and political science, and remarks that he "eagerly awaits documentation" of the assertion it contains. In closing he questions the report's authors' knowledge and understanding of classical political theory and impugns their motives in composing the report.

The authors of the report did indeed have

**TABLE 1**  
**The Political Classics and Empirical Political Science**

Contemporary empirical study	"Matters first identified as significant in classical political theory" treated in the contemporary empirical study	Specific mention of classic writer by empiricist	Empirical research method employed in the empirical study
Seymour M. Lipset, <i>Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics</i> (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1960)	The social and economic bases of stable democratic government. (For a "classic" consideration of this matter see Aristotle, <i>Politics</i> , Books IV, V, VI. See also J. J. Rousseau, <i>The Social Contract</i> , Bk. II, chs. 9, 10, 11; Bk. III, ch. 4. For a detailed comparison of Aristotle's and Lipset's approaches to this subject see W. T. Bluhm, <i>Theories of the Political System</i> , 3rd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1978), pp. 113-119.)	Several references to Aristotle's theories, one to Rousseau, passing references to Hobbes, Locke, Marx.	sample survey data, aggregate data
Robert D. Putnam, <i>The Beliefs of Politicians</i> (New Haven: Yale, 1973)	The relationship between political attitudes, values, beliefs on the one hand and political behavior on the other. (For a classic consideration of this subject see Aristotle, <i>Politics</i> , 1301 a-b, 1302 a-b.)	Definition of "classic", model of democracy drawn from Aristotle, <i>Politics</i> 1317b plus reference to Rousseau's comment on it. "Liberal" model of democracy drawn from Locke, Bentham, the two Mills.	random sample survey of British and Italian politicians
William T. Bluhm, <i>Building an Austrian Nation: The Political Integration of a Western State</i> (New Haven: Yale, 1973)	The conditions under which the "social contract" approach to political construction is likely to succeed. (See classic treatments by Hobbes and Locke.)	References to Hobbes' contract theory.	sample survey data, aggregate data
Christopher Achen, "Measuring Representation," <i>American Journal of Political Science</i> 22 (3) (August 1978): 476-510	The salient elements of "representativeness." (For a classic treatment see J. S. Mill, <i>Considerations on Representative Government</i> .)	Reference to the work of J. S. Mill. (Achen expressly states that he wishes to bring the normative and descriptive dimensions of the subject of "representativeness" together in this study.)	sample survey data

(continued on next page)

TABLE 1 (continued)

Contemporary empirical study	"Matters first identified as significant in classical political theory" treated in the contemporary empirical study	Specific mention of classic writer by empiricist	Empirical research method employed in the empirical study
Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, <i>The War Trap</i> (New Haven: Yale, 1981)	Why allies fight with each other. (For a classic treatment see Thucydides, <i>The Peloponnesian War</i> , 3:10-12.)	Reference to the work of Thucydides.	aggregate data
G. Bingham Powell, Jr., <i>Contemporary Democracies: Participation, Stability, and Violence</i> (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard, 1982)	The conditions of stability of a democratic system of government. (For a classic treatment see Aristotle, <i>Politics</i> , 1316b-1320b.)	Reference to Aristotle, <i>Politics</i> , Barker translation (Oxford ed.), pp. 184-186.	sample survey data aggregate data

in mind "the recognized 'classics' of political theory—i.e., principally the major works of Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Aquinas, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Hegel, Mill and Marx" when they wrote the paragraph in question. It is indeed also the case that over the last 25 years there has developed a literature of empirical political science which presents

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*The authors of the report have both read and understood classical political theory.*

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the results of "analyses of voting behavior, sample surveys, and aggregate data relating to categories of political systems" which "can be recognized as almost always addressing matters that were first identified as significant in classical political theory." The authors of this literature have attempted to refine and operationalize questions and hypotheses proposed by classical political theorists and either to answer the questions or to illustrate/test the hypotheses with techniques of empirical measurement that were not available to the classic philosophers. I furnish below, in tabular form, example documentation of this assertion

that Professor Germino wishes (see Table 1).

I could proliferate this table for pages, but the titles I have presented are adequate to document the assertion of the report that Professor Germino has contested. Taken together with the professional reputations of the classics scholars on the committee they are sufficient to show that the authors of the report have both read and understood classical political theory. They also demonstrate the continued relevance of the classics of political thought for empirical political science, as do the portions of Section II, paragraph I, that Professor Germino did not mention. It is distressing that Professor Germino, who has studied the classics so carefully, cannot see their relevance for contemporary political inquiry.

I should also like to observe that in colleges and universities where there are lively, even adversarial, discussions between classicists and empiricists both parties profit. Such discussions serve to make philosophers aware of their naivete about what is involved in empirical investigation, and of the importance of that investigation. They also make empiricists cognizant of their need to philosophize, in order to think critically about their models. In my view this sort of inter-

The continued importance of the humanistic tradition expressed in political philosophy is manifested in several ways. Classical political theory continues to define many of the fundamental problems, phrase the critical questions, and provide the crucial concepts that inform and directly or indirectly guide scholarship in political science, including that which is the most self-consciously scientific. Analyses of voting behavior, sample surveys, and aggregate data relating to categories of political systems as well as studies of implementation of public policy can be recognized as almost always addressing matters that were first identified as significant in classical political theory.

In addition, the enduring role of classical political theory in the discipline has meant that political scientists, as a community of scholars, never completely lost a feeling for the importance of dealing with basic values. While the scientific revolution pulled the discipline as a whole toward the goal of creating a science that would be value free, a continuing respect for the role of theory preserved a legitimate place for the serious treatment of values.

— from "Political Science and the Humanities: A Report of the American Political Science Association" (*PS*, Spring 1985, p. 252).

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change is more fruitful than a policy of splendid isolation which breeds resentment, misunderstanding, and fantasy. Without open communication no human things are "well after all."

William T. Bluhm  
University of Rochester

## Recording FBI Abuses

It is not the case, as asserted by Robert J. Goldstein, that the Roelofs-Houseman text contains "no references at all to the FBI" ("The FBI and American Politics Textbooks," *PS*, Spring 1985, pp. 237-246). It contains a lengthy discussion of the 1939-1975 "national emergency" detention plan on p. 506, a discussion of domestic intelligence-gathering on p. 501, an allusion to the "COINTELPRO" program (which we agree is important to know about) on p. 507, and a number of allusions to FBI activities throughout the text. On pp. 312-313, we supply the ACLU-suggested form letter to be sent to the FBI for obtaining your personal file. And, not unrelated to these concerns, we provide a practical guide to the law of search and seizure on pp. 502-503.

Our book was of course not designed to deal solely with the various civil liberties threats posed by the FBI, but we are concerned about this oversight since civil liberties issues were an important theme in our book. We are satisfied that we not only deal with the FBI and civil liberties, but that these are placed within a usable context by the other themes and concerns which tie the book together.

Incidentally, it will not do to argue that the FBI is not in our Index. Plenty of cross-references are provided.

Gerald L. Houseman  
University of California, Irvine

## Goldstein responds:

I am pleased to stand corrected by Professor Houseman. As I wrote in my arti-

cle (p. 238), in doing my research "all indexed entries referring to the FBI" were examined in 47 textbooks, thus leaving open "the possibility that poorly indexed books might include additional material" although "a check of several texts revealed no substantive references to the FBI that were not indexed." Since the 47 texts averaged about 500 pages apiece, it was not feasible to read each and every page and I clearly indicated I did not do so. Since Professor Houseman's letter is the only one of its kind received as of August 8 (three months after publication of my article), this may well be the only instance where poor indexing led me to overlook a substantive reference to the FBI.

I do think Professor Houseman is being a bit ungenerous in throwing the blame entirely on me since his book indexes many other government organizations, including, for example, the Food and Drug Administration, the International Commerce Commission and the Civilian Conservation Corps, each of which have only one indexed entry and are arguably far less significant than the FBI. Further, although Professor Houseman suggests "plenty of cross references are provided" there are no index entries under "COINTELPRO" (which is in fact nowhere mentioned or even clearly alluded to in the book, on page 507 or anywhere else), under "emergency detention," under "intelligence gathering," or under any other category which readily comes to mind clearly relevant to FBI abuses in the domestic intelligence field. The discussion of domestic intelligence gathering on page 501 nowhere alludes to the FBI, and the material on pp. 312-313 nowhere explains why or how it could be that the FBI might have files on anyone other than those who in the past have applied for a job with the federal government. I do applaud the discussion of FBI emergency detention planning on page 506, which I have dealt with at length in my own research ["An American Gulag? Summary Arrest and Emergency Detention of Political Dissidents in the United States," *Columbia Human Rights Law Review*, X (1979)].

In sum, although I think Professor Houseman's letter suggests the book he co-



authored deals far more extensively with FBI abuses in the domestic intelligence field than it in fact does, his book clearly does make some references to material relevant to this field and my article was in error in suggesting otherwise. But my error resulted from a faulty index rather than intentional misconstruction and I am glad to learn that I can subtract one book from my list of those which failed to deal with this topic at all.

Robert Justin Goldstein  
Oakland University

## Black Politics

Readers of Professor Wilson's note on political scientists who have studied black politics (*PS*, Summer 1985, pp. 600-607) might find the excellent work of John Strange of interest. His article on black politics, based on his 1966 Princeton doctoral dissertation, was written expressly for a volume on *Black Politics in Philadelphia* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), edited by Joseph Zikmund and myself.

Miriam Ershkowitz  
Texas Tech University

## Liberation Poster Exhibits

Third World posters on a whole range of topics—human rights, development and women's issues as well as liberation struggles—are collected, restored, translated and exhibited through my firm, Liberation Graphics.

I receive many calls and letters from political science teachers who have seen or read about my exhibits. They usually request free posters or exhibits unaware of the costs involved in developing a formal exhibit. I am flattered by the acknowledgement of my work but, until now, I have not been able to respond meaningfully to these requests.

At the present time I am putting together a historical liberation graphics portfolio at the behest of the Smithsonian Institution's Traveling Exhibition Service

(SITES) and the Washington Project for the Arts. This portfolio will highlight the development of the contemporary poster traditions of the Philippines, Cuba, Nicaragua, the Palestinians and South Africa.

I feel that it is possible for Liberation Graphics to do something positive and creative for the political science educators who write and request graphic resources to enhance their world studies programs: I can reroute prepaid exhibits, once the original client has finished with it, to a political science department for its temporary use. What this means is that instead of dismantling an exhibit after its initial showing, I would allow it to travel to a school, with no fee involved, if I have received the request in advance.

Of course, the schools will have to assume responsibility for shipping and insurance costs, which will vary depending upon the location. If, however, this approach works and teachers contact me well in advance of their program it may even work out that some of my regular clients would pay the shipping and insurance as a goodwill gesture. One of the reasons I am willing to explore this matter is that I think some of my clients would actually like to see some of their exhibits

toured to high schools and universities. It is also possible that if the idea catches on additional posters will be printed during the original printing run for free distribution to the students who will later see the exhibit at their school.

As with any exploratory endeavor, there are no hard and fast rules. Each professor or department wishing to consider an exhibit should contact me as far in advance as possible—three months is not an unusual lead time for formal exhibition preparation—and we will consider the details at that time, in a spirit of mutual cooperation.

Finally, if any of your members wish to receive copies of posters related to contemporary issues of the Third World they may write to me and I will be pleased to refer them to the appropriate organization. Many human rights and development groups distribute free or inexpensive posters from time to time and your

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members can request these directly from the sponsor.

I look forward to hearing from you and to cooperating with APSA. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Daniel J. Walsh  
Curator, Liberation Graphics

P.O. Box 2394  
Alexandria, VA 22301  
Phone: (703) 549-4957