

The Saturday Review



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The First Order of Business

WHAT is the real issue in the debate over free trade? Is it American protectionism versus world economic health? Is it the coddling of certain American industries as against our responsibilities as a member of the world economic community? Is it the American standard of living as opposed to world betterment?

No; these are not the real issues. If the debate over world trade is to mean anything it must begin with the fact that the real issue lies outside economics. The real issue is an historic one. For free trade cannot exist except under certain conditions. It cannot exist in an unstable and insecure world—a world without adequate means of protecting itself against surprise aggression and war. True, efforts in the direction of enlarging free trade can contribute to world stability; but such gains are comparatively minor alongside the massive factors having to do with world instability and chaos.

In the context of today's world free trade can help to bolster the free nations, but it can be maintained only through a certain measure of economic and political integration among the nations involved. In Europe, for example, it is already clear that efforts to promote Continental trade are inextricably tied up with the basic need for overall political organization. For free trade is much more the effect of an ordered and healthy world than it is the cause of it. To argue that the world can never have economic health unless there is free world trade is like arguing that a man who is locked up in a dungeon will not be healthy until he can have good food, clean air, and exercise.

Similarly, a healthy world economic community is possible only when the peace is assured—in short, a world possessing the ability of enforceable law. The world cannot expect to find economic sanity in political anarchy. So long as 50 per cent of the world's economy is diverted to war preparations there can be no long-range basis for economic stability. If nation after nation is going to slide into an inflationary spiral because of an unstable war economy, if individual pay checks are to have ever-increasing deductions in order to pay for expanding armaments, if business is to be taxed beyond the point where incentive is possible, then the free-trade issue becomes somewhat academic.

A large part of American industry has a vital stake not only in world trade but in overseas investments. That trade and those investments depend only partially on the business policies and operations of the corporations involved. Overwhelmingly they depend upon a workable peace. It is at this point that we observe one of the great paradoxes of American business. Enormous sums will be spent by corporations to safeguard their investments, but surprisingly little thought and effort will be given to the overriding factor affecting their future—namely, world peace.

In this sense, of course, the paradox is not limited to business with foreign interests. The main problem for American industry today—as it is for every aspect of American life and for the individual American—is freedom from war and the threat of war. America has no real defense against atomic attack despite all the billions that have been spent. There can be no defense since it would take a rela-

tively small number of guided missiles with atomic warheads to devastate our cities and industrial concentration. To be sure, there is the power of instantaneous retaliation as a possible shield; but that by itself may not be enough to dispel the growing tension and hostilities that could bring on a war. Moreover, our vulnerability is much greater than that of our possible enemies because of the dominant agricultural nature of those countries.

Businessmen pride themselves on their sense of anticipation. They believe in looking ahead, in planning for all contingencies. They operate vast research establishments not only for the purpose of anticipating future demands but in order to be ready to meet those demands when they arise. They take out insurance to protect their business interests against anything that has as small as a 1 per cent chance of happening. They will protect themselves against tropical squalls even though they are located far north of the tropical region. They will install elaborate fire prevention and fire-fighting facilities. They will put their employes under bond.

BUT what about the eventuality of war? This, plainly, is something that the people would just rather not think about, or perhaps the thought is dismissed by assigning total responsibility to government. Yet, neither the danger of war nor the consequences of war, if it comes, is within the ability of government alone to handle adequately. What makes our age different from previous ages is that the question of war and peace has become too large for governments to manage by themselves. In fact, national governments by their very nature tend to resist doing that which is absolutely essential to create a workable peace; namely, to build a truly effective world authority with sovereignty of its own and authority strong enough to protect freedom where it exists and to underwrite world security. The momentum for the making of such a system of world law may have to come from the people inside the nations and the organizations and institutions through which their sovereign rights as citizens are exercised.

If the leaders of American business were to spend half their time studying ways in which the United Nations could become truly effective, that time allotment would not be too large in terms of their business interests. If American industry were to contribute one billion dollars for research on the basic conditions required for building a world society under law, that sum would not be too large considering the possible return on the investment. The first order of business today is a design for a workable peace. —N.C.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

GPB (CONT.)

It's a fair assumption that I read with interest Henry (Blackman) Sell's retelling of the discovery of "Gentlemen Prefer Blondes" [SR Dec. 5] and A. E. Hotchner's letter in the same issue.

I let that issue of SR remain in my portfolio until I could have it read by my wife, Nelle, because experience has taught me that she is a perceptive reader.

I said to her, "Look, Henry Sell's called me a dirty name!"

"What sort of dirty name?" she asked.

"I can't even pronounce it!"

"Let me see it," she commanded. "Hmm . . . the word is *schizotrichiatic*, pronounced *schizotrichiatic*. So *that's* what I'm married to!"

Henry, how could you, when you know I'd much rather split a sliver of that excellent Sell's liver pate with you?

But Mr. Hotchner's letter was a hair from a different head. He is a capable writer, and his piece about GPB, originally published in *Theatre Arts*, was interesting and enjoyable. It was, unfortunately, without basis in fact so far as the magazine publication is concerned.

Although Henry Sell has pointed out to Mr. Hotchner the error of his ways, here are a few more corrections:

The voucher for the purchase of GPB was dated September 4, 1924. The series was published in *Harper's Bazaar* from March 1925 to August 1925.

However, Mr. Hotchner, quoting a friend, says "It (GPB) languished in *Cosmopolitan's* safe until Long left the magazine and until Henry Sell . . . came across it, read it . . . promptly began serializing it."

As a matter of fact, Henry Sell left the Hearst organization in the middle Twenties to start two or three new and even more successful careers for himself. Ray Long didn't leave the Hearst organization until 1931.

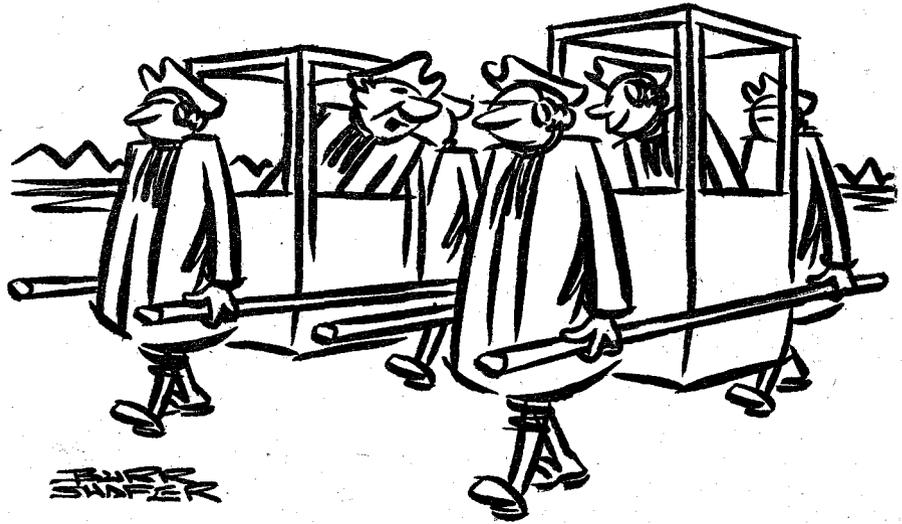
WILLIAM C. LENGEL.

New York, N.Y.

AUNT LIZZIE VS. AUNT SOPHRONIA

DALE WARREN certainly seems to imply that the old familiar phrases are dead; gone with the suspirations of Aunt Liz, [SR Dec. 5]. . . . But it seems to me that the old familiar phrases plug along in a pedestrian fashion and sound as if they are still good for the long haul. With few exceptions the old phrases are still in common use among us, and when the thousands of our American friends come north to enjoy a holiday in this foreign land of Canada we use the same language made up of the same aphorisms, idioms, adages, axioms, and much the same colloquialisms. We also exchange quips, catch-phrases, pert sayings, and slang terms of the May-fly type that both of us will have forgotten when spring rolls around next year. . . .

Mr. Warren says "white collar" and "stiff-necked" are losing ground because



"How are yours on hills?"

of a change of dress. The implication seems to be that the stiff neck was due to the starched collar, but my Aunt Sophronia reminds me that somewhere in The Book mention is made of a perverse and stiff-necked generation that knew not the white collar. She tells me further that stiff-necked in this ancient case referred to the failure of the perverse generation to nod their heads in assent. I pointed out to Sophronia that this might not be fact for it is reported that Australian aborigines shake their heads sideways to mean yes; maybe the perverse ones did likewise. But she remained unimpressed; she replied with a touch of sarcasm, "Yes, and some of the rest of the people do too; if that is the depth of your perception it probably accounts for your being a bachelor at your age."

D. F. McRAE.

Carlyle, Canada

ENLIGHTENED SELF-INTEREST

IN RESPONSE TO Garfield R. Morgan's recent request [SR LETTERS, Dec. 26] for some further comment on my use of the phrase "enlightened self-interest" [SR Nov. 7], I do not know who originated or first popularized the expression. I first recall hearing it about thirty-five years ago in a college economics course when it was associated with the eighteenth-century economists and philosophers who had such an influence on our founding fathers. Economically the American dream has always been that freedom of enterprise will yield material benefits as rich as freedom of conscience in the religious sphere or freedom of inquiry in the sciences. In my discussion of "The Last Fifty Years—and the Next" I perhaps placed too much stress on the nineteenth century and not enough on the eighteenth. Woodrow Wilson was a child of the nineteenth century. Franklin Roosevelt was more a child of the

eighteenth. And President Eisenhower, who received such solid instruction in the fundamentals of the American faith, as even more an eighteenth- than a nineteenth- or a twentieth-century product. It was with that original, pure Americanism that I was identifying him, and his own frequent use of "enlightened self-interest" struck me as a revealing phrase. I am sure it began to circulate before 1900, but the inspiration, I believe, lies even further back.

QUINCY HOWE.

Urbana, Ill.

KOPPA PI RHO

BEING A CONFESSED AMATEUR in the field of philology, I do not dare to protest against any of the statements in Frank Denman's article, "The ABC Around Us" [SR Jan. 2]; but I should like to ask clarification of two points:

(1) Greek grammars state that the symbol used by the Greeks for 90—a letter consisting of a circle resting on a short vertical line—is the obsolete letter *koppa*, and that this letter used to come between *pi* (= p, numerical value 80) and *rho* (= r, numerical value 100) in the alphabet. Is not this letter a more reasonable origin of Latin Q than the Greek *phi* could ever be?

(2) Just why should printed letters modeled on hand-written forms be "a perfect horror on the composing machine"? Does not the striking of the E key set an E in its proper place in the line, regardless of whether the form of that letter be Black Letter, Vogue, or anything in between? I have no wish to defend Black Letter on esthetic grounds, but Mr. Denman seems to imply that the form of the letters is an actual mechanical inconvenience to typesetting, and this I fail to see.

GORDON G. EVANS.

Billerica, Mass.