

Saturday Review

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The Prosperity Gap

EDITOR'S NOTE: *The author of the following guest editorial, written especially for this annual business issue of SR, is chairman of the board of the Xerox Corporation. He was a founder of the International Executive Service Corps, a private group that, in cooperation with the federal government, provides executive manpower for developing countries.*

THE REAL challenge of our prosperity is not just how to keep it, but how to use it. The heart of the problem is, in John Gardner's phrase, "how to stay awake on a full stomach."

Exactly what does our prosperity mean—not in financial or statistical terms, but in human terms? For most Americans it stands for a comfortable income and an unprecedented standard of living. Yet within our affluence there are 10,000,000 families living on less than \$60 a week and trapped in a cycle of poor housing, inferior education, inadequate jobs. And our prosperity as a nation also means a further widening of the tragic gap that separates us from the hundreds of millions of "have-nots" of the world.

Obviously, therefore, the definition of prosperity in a world as heavily marked by poverty as by progress is bound to be a paradox, and prosperity becomes no more or less than the perspective from which it is viewed.

From what perspective should American business view it?

Some people will be surprised that American business even asks itself such a question. For in the eyes of many

around the world—and some here at home—the American businessman is a myopic jingoist still married to the axioms of Adam Smith and seeking only power for himself and gain for his business. What has been obscured by such distorted impressions and caricatures is that business is achieving in this country what has seldom been achieved elsewhere: a truly effective working relationship with government. The result has been a larger society of great social, cultural, and educational advances. The fact is that only through such cooperation have we been able to establish and nurture institutions such as the Community Chest, the Red Cross, our many universities and colleges, symphony orchestras, art galleries, and other cultural hallmarks of our society, as well as our large medical research programs and relief efforts, both here and abroad.

I suggest that the time and the opportunity are now right to expand this relationship still further in ways that will make our prosperity even more meaningful and, at the same time, reveal the true face of American business.

The "War on Poverty" program has recently been launched by the federal government. It is designed to help the poor help themselves. A number of businessmen have been viewing the program with misgivings and questions—and understandably so. For admittedly it is to a large extent only a codification of existing projects and will hardly mean a cure for the disease of poverty. But what it represents is of direct con-

cern to business: a commitment by the government to help develop the economic potential of the poor, rather than just maintain them with "handouts."

If the anti-poverty program is to succeed, it must have the cooperation and active participation of American business and industry. For the ultimate objective will be jobs, and at stake is the future of millions of Americans. Thus one of the key challenges that now confront American business is to work with government in the reclamation of those on the slag heap of our society and the effort to turn them into contributing citizens. It is a challenge business must accept, if for no other reason than because we have long regarded the development of human resources as an integral part of the business of American business.

By the same token, the American businessman must look at his enterprise from the perspective of countless human beings in the world who are no longer thousands of miles away but just past the runway's edge. Whether he likes it or not, he recognizes that the future of his own business is inextricably and inevitably bound up with what is going on in places like Vietnam, Laos, and the Congo. He recognizes that what will happen to the unseen millions who live in destitution and squalor around the earth will in a very real sense determine what will happen to us.

THE businessman's role in the development of sound international economic programs is, therefore, more important today than ever. He is not only called upon to participate in evolving sound trade policies, but also to help in the creation and implementation of foreign aid programs. Economic growth of the developing nations has become a commercial necessity as well as a wise and practical investment in our own security. With government today seeking more and more help from private enterprise in international trade and aid programs, the business community has a growing opportunity and responsibility to spread truth more quickly and to advance civilization itself more effectively.

Meeting the challenge of prosperity can therefore mean far more than the end of prevalent myths about American businessmen. It can also mean the re-inspiration and reinforcement of a partnership between business and government in which each is acutely aware of its obligation to the other and both are aware of their joint obligations to people everywhere. It offers the opportunity to prove that we know not only how to achieve prosperity but also how to use it effectively in order to help build the kind of world we want—one of freedom and dignity for all men.

—SOL M. LINOWITZ.

SR/January 9, 1965

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Always on Sunday

THE LOWLY BAGEL, how it has risen! Practically half a Sutton article [SR, Nov. 21] devoted to it, which, in turn, elicits letters to the editor! Perforce I must add my comments.

The origins of that threat-to-all-dentures morsel, the bagel, are unimportant. What is intriguing is the interest the hard roll engenders in enthusiasts and uninitiate alike. In 1948, when I was a fledgling writer on Madison Avenue, a friend came up with a bagel idea. For 65 cents he would deliver to your door every Sunday morning a packet containing lox, bagels, and cream cheese (traditional Sunday breakfast for many families in Jewish neighborhoods of New York). His deliveries were made anywhere in the city by a crew of disabled World War II veterans.

Enthralled with the idea, I took it to Clementine Paddleford, who blessed the enterprise with a glowing article in the *Herald Tribune*. The result: thousands of telephone calls clamoring for delivery.

Further, a full-page picture in the now defunct magazine *Pic* showed my friends, on a Sunday morning, pouring cascades of fresh bagels onto assembly tables prior to filling orders. That picture triggered the memory of a rabbi in Puerto Rico who wired us to send the delicacy Air Express.

All of which proves that bagel aficionados go to rare lengths to obtain that tidbit referred to by SR as a cement-like roll.

LILLIAN PIERSON COHEN.

Gloversville, N.Y.

I AM AMAZED. I thought all readers of SR were, if not absolute gourmets, at least sufficiently cosmopolitan in their dining habits to know what a simple little bagel is. Or has Lucius M. Lamar, whose letter appeared in the December 12 issue, spent his life supping so loftily that the hot dog and the hamburger are similarly unknown to him?

Your description of the bagel, while apt, is wholly inadequate. It falls far short of properly conveying to Mr. Lamar the necessary facts regarding the additional ingredients mandatory toward the full and pleasurable savoring of this Sunday-morning breakfast delight. To enlighten Mr. Lamar, somebody should have actually sent a bagel along to him. With, maybe, some lox and cream cheese.

Better yet, invite him to come North and try one.

DAN WALLACK.

New York, N.Y.

Man with a Country

MY LATE FATHER, Hendrik Willem van Loon, would have been overwhelmingly flattered! At the same time, his appreciation of life's and death's little ironies would have evoked a rueful smile at seeing himself referred to as a "native American" in David Dempsey's review of the Dodd, Mead Anniversary Anthology [SR, Dec. 12].

Hendrik Willem was born in Rotterdam, Holland, and came to this country, age



"I've been in the rat race for six years now, Mr. Griswold, and I have a right to know—who's ahead?"

twenty, in 1902. Though he studied at Cornell and Harvard and married a Bostonian (my mother), both my brother and I were born as Dutch citizens in Europe. Hendrik Willem did not come here to live until 1912 and we all attained U.S. citizenship on father's papers in 1919.

In the meantime, Hendrik Willem (who chose to write exclusively in English) had turned out three books, one of which netted him a royalty of \$41.58, but (and here again Mr. Dempsey did not do his homework) he was actually "introduced" to the American reading public by Albert Boni and Horace Liveright with *The Story of Mankind* in 1921. Twenty-two years, twenty-nine books, and three more best-sellers later, Dodd, Mead came into the picture with three small biographies for children, the last of which, *Gustavus Vasa*, was published posthumously in 1945.

Since I am writing my father's biography I have these facts at my fingertips, but much of this is a matter of record in *Who's Who*. What you won't find there are the letters written in the last years of father's life in which he hopes that some day he will be able to write "an adequate English" or in which he confesses he came here too late in life to be considered—or to consider himself—an American. He would have been flattered to think that he had made the grade at last. In his name and in his memory may I say thank you, David Dempsey.

GERARD WILLEM VAN LOON.

New York, N.Y.

A World Language?

HAROLD TAYLOR's account of how a "recent experiment in global education points the

way to a larger community of the intellect" [SR, Nov. 14] is a timely article and deserves thoughtful reading. However, in his approach to the international aspects of a world college, Dr. Taylor bypasses the full implication of the language problem. He says: "A full-scale world college . . . would of course have to deal with the language problem, probably in the manner of the United Nations, with English and French as working languages, and simultaneous translations for others (a translation of the world's literature into all languages would be an essential component of the humanities curriculum)." With some 2,600 languages in the world, a translation of the world's literature into all languages is manifestly an impossibility. As for English and French as working languages, and simultaneous translations for others, this form of communication is showing signs of questionable usefulness on the international scene. There are now many international organizations in which Esperanto is the only official language in use. High schools and colleges are teaching the language throughout the world and it is currently being taught at the United Nations. Esperanto is also being broadcast over the Voice of America. . . .

In science and electronics, art, music and religion, commerce, international politics, and world affairs, Esperanto is completely ready and adequate. In expressing fine shades of meaning in both prose and poetry, Esperanto ranks with the national languages, and thus could open the door to a more complete atmosphere of international cooperation.

ELWYN C. POLLOCK.

Morongo Valley, Calif.