

a warden in a prison, a supervisor of animals in a zoo.

A person of spirit and independence would give the rough edge of his tongue to anyone who tried to play the role of "keeper" by intruding into the concerns of his private life. And this is just as true for nations as for men. There is something naive in the surprised distress with which some Americans receive the not infrequent news that a mob in the capital of some country which has been on the handout list for foreign aid has pulled down the American flag or smashed the handsome quarters of the United States information agency.

Foreign Aid Resented

Behind such episodes is often an element of communist instigation. But this is by no means the whole story. No matter how poor a people may be, they have an instinctive revulsion against the idea of being "kept" by another. Here is one psychological explanation of why American aid has so often been met by brickbats, not bouquets. Another irritant is the large number of Americans in diplomatic and related establishments and the visibly lavish style in which they live. The poorer and more undeveloped the country economically, the more noticeable is this sort of thing.

There has been much anguished discussion, with the aid of high-powered psychology and opinion polls, of the question why Americans are not better liked abroad. One of the reasons, beyond reasonable doubt, is America's self-assumed role as "brother's keeper" for a vast number of peoples in foreign lands, many with profoundly different traditions, cultures, tastes, and habits. Even the most tactfully proffered advice can easily be resented as intrusion and interference; and the sudden injection of large numbers of free-spending Americans has sometimes created awkward financial and trade problems.

Looking back to the far-off days when the political systems and the economies of distant lands in Asia, Africa, and Latin America were regarded as the concern of the natives of these lands, when government-to-government grants were unknown, when Americans were content to invest and do business in countries where they were welcome and to stay away from those where they were not, when the United States government considered its first task as protecting the security and legitimate interests of its citizens abroad, one wonders whether Americans were not just as well or perhaps better liked when their government was not trying to play beneficent Big

Brother to the rest of the world. And behind this lies still another question.

Is it so important to be a winner in an international popularity contest? In the age of Britain's greatest international power and prestige, in the nineteenth century, there is no evidence that the British government or individual traveling Britons cared very much about the "national image" or attached undue importance to the question whether they were liked or not.

Perhaps respect is a more reasonable and feasible goal than liking, which is sometimes least achieved when most pursued. No doubt many individual Americans have won esteem for themselves and, incidentally, for their country by striking out as pioneers of some new project in economic development, or health, or education in a foreign country. But there is precious little indication that the bureaucrats who shovel out foreign aid have won a place in the hearts of the natives of the countries to which they have been assigned.

The "brother's keeper" philosophy, with its false interpretation of Scripture, is just as inapplicable in dealings between individuals as in relations between nations. Meddlers in other people's affairs, however good their intentions, seldom win much thanks for

their pains. Sometimes the theory of collective responsibility is carried to truly absurd lengths.

It was by no means uncommon, after the assassination of President Kennedy, for orators in and out of pulpits to put forward the idea that the whole American people was responsible for this tragedy. This is sheer nonsense. According to all the evidence collected by painstaking search of a government commission, supplemented by the private investigations of many journalists and publicists, a single unbalanced person conceived and executed the assassination, without accomplices, without instigation. How, in the name of reason and common sense, can the whole American people be regarded as participants in the demented act of this person?

More Harm than Good

Throughout history the efforts of religious spokesmen to take sides and pronounce judgments on secular political and economic issues has probably wrought more harm than good. It is the primary function of religion to elevate the soul and improve the conduct of the individuals who respond to its teachings. There is no reason to assume that there is a divine sanction for Keynesian or other forms of collectivist economics.

And an international society of