

THE ALL-INDIA VILLAGE INDUSTRIES ASSOCIATION

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THROUGH GANDHIAN EYES

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MAGANVADI  
WARDHA, C. P.  
1948

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T. KALLUPPATTY POST.

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## PREFACE

Some one had said that the difference between a wise man and a fool lies in that the wise man learns from other people's experiences while the fool gets his lessons from his own acts. India has taken into its hands the steering wheel and is in a position to direct its future course either towards peace and prosperity or head for turmoil and destruction. Which shall it be ?

Many have been enamoured of the glamour that the Western nations put up as a consequence of their taking to centralised methods of production of standardised articles on a mass scale. Their history runs back to nearly two centuries. There are many in our land who would advocate India pursuing the same methods. Hence it becomes our duty to study their experience and the results they have attained before embarking on the same course.

These articles have been brought together to give in a short compass with a clear perspective, the real achievements of the West with the consequences. We trust this will form a beacon light on the way of the unsuspecting traveller.

15th February, 1948

Maganvadi,

Wardha. C. P.

J. C. Kumarappa

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## LET US LEARN

Dr. Hugh Dalton, Chancellor of the British Exchequer speaking in the House of Commons a few days ago laid down certain principles on which he is working to meet the shortage of food in Great Britain and also dealt with the maintenance of the economic machinery by properly regulated exports. The economy of Great Britain differs widely from that of ours. Bulk of food materials in Great Britain comes from abroad while she exports great many manufactured articles to pay for it. However that may be, the policy followed is capable of being applied to our own country. The underlying motive in Dr. Dalton's policy is to provide the people with sufficient food and everybody to be dealt with equally. India can supply her own needs if she has a definite policy to govern her economic organization. This, we are afraid, is now lacking. Therefore, it would be well for us to study the way the statesmen are handling the situation in Great Britain.

Dr. Dalton said: "The guiding principle adopted in framing this policy is to sustain the productive power of Britain and, therefore, to safeguard in the first place those imports which are essential to the health and strength of our people, to the employment and to the efficient equipment of our industry". To do this it is imperative that we should have a scale of values on which to see which articles should be given priority. As Dr. Dalton put it: "We must achieve

economies of the less essential imports". He proposes to do this by a substantial reduction of the imports of tobacco, petrol and newsprint. We know that these three articles have in Great Britain an inelastic demand—that is, the people would buy them at any price. British smoking habit, their dependence on petrol-driven vehicles and their interest in public affairs make these three items almost necessities and yet their statesmen have the foresight and courage to cut out these when food is in danger. Furthermore, he has also said that he will have to arrange for exports of textiles to enable imports of food. This means that Dr. Dalton has the courage to meet not only the consumers but also the vested interests in the textile industry. These measures, they call, "austerity cuts".

In Great Britain, in addition to the above articles, they are imposing a duty on films. These again have now assumed the role of necessities in countries like Great Britain.

In contrast to this determined attack on food shortage, we find here in India that the Government is allowing cotton to be exported. This means that we are growing more cotton than food. India is an agricultural country. The first charge on the land must be food-crops and no money-crop should be grown when there is a shortage of food. There are extensive lands under cultivation of tobacco and also long staple cotton for mills. Are we not then to follow the good example set by Great Britain and act with grim determination ?

Not only should we produce more food but we must conserve the food already grown. We have time and again mentioned in these columns that production of white sugar decreases the food value of our agricultural product. Similarly milling of rice and polishing of it reduce the food value found



in paddy. Therefore, if we are courageous enough to meet the situation today, we should be banning all rice mills and reducing our sugar product.

Unfortunately our Governments are slack where the interests of the masses are concerned. News comes from Bihar that five new sugar factories are to be constructed in different parts of the province and the Government is about to issue licences in a few weeks. Some of the sugar factories, we hear, have the audacity to launch on legal proceedings to recover damages from the Government. They seem to hold that the fixing of sugar prices have led them to losses. It would, therefore, be wiser on the part of the Government, instead of dabbling and controlling of these prices, to cut out the erring limbs altogether by banning sugar mills and rice mills as an anti-social device for destruction of food.

We hope that in a Swaraj Government where the ministries will have the popular support, their hands will be strengthened to fight the vested interests at every turn.

July 20, 1947

—*Harijan*

## II

### A GOOD EXAMPLE TO FOLLOW

At the last conference of Food Officials at Delhi it was stated that the next rice crop will yield only 83 per cent. The shortage is therefore considerable, though the situation may be ameliorated in some parts of the country where the rains are good. In any case, the food situation in the country is one which requires careful attention. India is importing thousands of tons of food from abroad. This is a reflection on an agricultural country. India has now become independent of the British rule, and it hopes to attain swaraj in the near future, in which the will of the masses will be reflected in the Central Government. No country that aims at being independent, can attain that position as long as the country is dependent on other countries for its primary necessities. We have, therefore, to put forth our best efforts to make India self-sufficient in food.

After a great deal of turmoil and suffering the European nations are beginning to realize that it is dangerous to depend on distant countries for their food requirements. Even England, which so far has been depending on outside help to meet its food requirements, has realized that it is futile to be dependent on foreign countries for food if they have to maintain their independence. With this end in view, they are launching out on a new land programme to increase their agricultural products. Mr. Tom Williams, the Minister for Agriculture stated that the Government programme is essentially one for reviving

the expansion and production of meat, eggs, wheat and barley and adding no less than 400,000 acres of linseed. They are hoping to increase the wheat acreage next year by 500,000 acres. To do this the Government assures the producers their markets, good prices, subsidies and grant, giving the industry first priority for buildings, housing and other assistance.

One may understand a highly industrialized country like England, depending on her exports to get food in return. Even here, Great Britain is cutting down imports of such consumer goods as can be foregone, though under austerity conditions, and at the same time she wishes to export textiles, etc., even at the cost of shortage at home to maintain her food imports. The determined effort put forward by the ministers in this direction stands in marked contrast with the mere propaganda work of our Government of India. India can hardly compare industrially with Great Britain, and yet, with the little industrialization that we have had, the country has had to depend on foreign imports for food. If we pursue the industrialization policy indicated by some friends in high places, we may well imagine the dire consequences that may follow in its train on the food sector. One of the striking features of the British landscape today is the appearance of vegetable patches wherever land can be utilized for that purpose. In addition to this they are hoping to bring in hundreds of thousands of acreage under fresh cultivation. Cannot the Ministry of Food in our country follow this good example and ban money crops for industrial purposes and give priority for food crops to such lands as are under industrial exploitation today? This can be done if there is a will to feed the population by its own effort. It may require controlling of the use of land and may lead even to licensing of

land for particular crops. Farmers desiring to raise industrial crops may be required to take out a licence paying adequate fees, and by this method it may be possible to regulate the use of land in the interests of the nation rather than in the interests of the bank accounts of a few persons. This would entail the close cooperation of effort between the Ministries of Food and Industries. We trust such cooperation in the interests of the health of the nation will be forthcoming.

November, 1947

—Gram Udyog Patrika

### III (a)

## LESSONS FROM RUSSIA

Speaking on a cut motion in the Legislative Assembly recently Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the Prime Minister in the course of his speech defending the obtaining of furniture from Stockholm for the Embassy at Moscow said, "It just is not possible to furnish in Moscow. You get an empty house. We thought of sending things from India, but it was almost physically impossible, unless we spent vast sums over aeroplanes carrying chairs and tables from here ! Of course, it could be furnished alternatively with Russian furniture. [The Russian people, and all credit to them for this, ever since this war, are so intent on doing what they consider to be the fundamental things, that they refuse to waste their time on accessories of life. They have to build up their country after the most horrible sufferings and damage they suffered in the war and they are building it up in regard to the major under-takings. They go about in torn clothes and broken down shoes, it does not matter, but they are building dams, reservoirs and factories and the rest which they consider more important.] So it is not easy to get any of these small accessories of life for the moment. The result is our Embassy in Moscow had to go to Stockholm for its tables and chairs."

Russia made tremendous sacrifices after the 1917 revolution and built up an economy which was the admiration and wonder of certain types of economic thinkers. After

30 years of forced-pace planning and repeated stepping up of their production plans we find Russia is not able to supply even tables and chairs and they have to be content with "torn clothes and broken down shoes" !. Why ? This is a lesson for India to sit down and think before she takes to the same line of action.

Russia built enormous "dams, reservoirs and factories" after the first world war at a stupendous human cost. Where are they now? Once again they are building "dams, reservoirs and factories." How long are they going to last ? Will history repeat it-self in another twenty years ? The people are now said to be again "going about in torn clothes and broken down shoes." What has been the benefit to the common man of all the sacrifices that have been made ? How has the world been benefited ? May India draw its lessons ?

May we take a lesson from the Russians that they are "intent on doing fundamental things." In India we have not even "clothes" to be "torn" nor "shoes" to be "broken down". Our fundamental thing is food for the very existence. Under these circumstances whether India obtains "tables and chairs from Stockholm" or not is not the thing that will affect the people of the land. One would imagine obtaining food is a greater "fundamental need", but the planning that the Government of India does today ignores this very need and is directing its attention to the frills of life which the Embassies are to the imperialist nations. They are not even "small accessories" to an agricultural country like ours.

February, 1948

— Gram Udyog Patrika.

### III

## AN OPPORTUNITY LOST ?

The staple diet of the British is meat. The war upset all customs and traditions. The most conservative of customs is the menu. Yet the force of circumstances has compelled the British to make drastic changes in the kind of food they eat. Naturally, in a meat-based diet cereals play only a secondary role. Still their Ministry of Food is wide awake to the needs of the nation. Today, the one time fashionable white bread is unprocurable. They had realized the folly of throwing away nutritive parts of food while the nation is experiencing a shortage of food stuffs. Brown whole meal bread rules the day.

Our country affords a striking contrast to this. Ours is a cereal-based diet in which cereals play the leading role. Masses of our people exist on nothing but rice, wheat and other cereals. Our Ministry of Food is so weak-kneed that even the Government ration shops have only polished rice for the people. Have we not lost a golden opportunity of banning rice mills and thus increasing the nutritive value of the food the masses eat ? Is it too late to act even now ?

26th Oct. 47

—*Harijan.*

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## IV

### IS IT ASCETICISM ?

The way of life advocated by Gandhiji is often attributed to the strain of the ascetic in him. Because of this the mode of life advocated stands discredited. If properly understood it would be seen that the need for simplicity is the basis of any economy aiming at permanence. During my recent visit to Europe nothing impressed me so much as the fact that the force of circumstances is driving the people of aristocratic England to simplify their lives—willy nilly.

[ Owing to Great Britain's dependence on the outside world for food, she is compelled to forego many imported consumer goods in favour of food and to pay for these she is obliged to export cloth and other manufactured articles, even though these goods may be in short supply in Britain itself. As a result of this one finds hardly any woman wearing stockings and I was amazed to find young men riding about on bicycles in the streets of London in bathing slippers with not a stitch of clothing above the waist. These are no followers of the Mahatma and they wear less than he does ! In the days of old if any one attempted to go about in such stages of nudity, such a person would have been promptly arrested as being indecently clad. ]

The high rates of wages prevailing have practically made it impossible to employ household servants. This situation, combined with the scarcity of soap, has made sending



of clothes to be washed by laundries a luxury open to but a few. Existing laundries will not undertake to wash a shirt under a fortnight. This situation leads those who want to be reasonably clean to wash their own clothes. Such are no *ashramites* devoted to a philosophy of self-sufficiency !

The shortage in food has led to heroic efforts to supplement the available. In our own land, our "heroic efforts" seem to dry up with the advertisements of the "Grow more food campaign". But in Britain one sees every back yard, which not so long ago was littered with rubbish, turned into vegetable patches growing potatoes, cabbages, cauliflower, lettuce etc. The householder returns from work and rolling up his sleeves attends to his vegetable garden. Is this return to working on the land "putting the clock back" ?

With all this the middle and working classes look well fed and better clothed than they were ever before. Compared with their condition about three to four decades ago they are definitely better off. Wars have certainly conduced towards a better distribution of wealth.

The Government subsidises certain food articles needed by the general population to the extent of about fifty per cent and in some cases even higher. This programme has taken the business out of the hands of the blackmarketeer. Can our Government take a leaf out of this ? Though the food is rationed, every one is ensured a balanced diet. May it not be that the rationing has, by controlling overeating and bad dieting, brought about the better health conditions of the people ?

When we rationally simplify our lives to serve greater ends we need not be fanatics. London has been driven to Gandhian mode of life by circumstances beyond their control.

Is it not nobler to anticipate such conditions and regulate our lives accordingly ?

It is astounding to note the scarcity of ordinary consumption goods in Great Britain and Europe, after their strenuously attempting to produce goods and more goods by standardization and large scale production methods for over 150 years. With all that human effort if we can get only to where Europe is today, is it worthwhile India going the same insensate way of "industrialization" ?

September, 1947

—Gram Udyog Patrika

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## V

### TRAVEL OR TRANSPORT ?

As days go on it seems travelling by air is becoming more and more common amongst at least the rich. All manner of means are being used to popularize and extend this service. Hence it becomes necessary for us to study the place of Air Travel in society.

The phrase 'a much travelled man' connotes generally the significance of travelling. We expect such a person to have come in contact with all sorts and conditions of men and things, and, therefore, through his intelligent approach to other people's lives, we expect such a person to be broad-minded, well-informed and cultured. Travelling, therefore, has various advantages attached to it. In ancient time, the pilgrimages in India were based on such cultural aspect of travel, though they were given a religious colouring.

A traveller at different stages comes in contact with different types of men. He enters into conversation with them, finds out what their customs and traditions are and compares them with the conditions prevailing at home. This ultimately leads to cultural development. We encourage, therefore, our children to read books of travel which means educating them and giving them information in regard to our fellowmen. If we look upon travel from this point of view, the phrase "Air Travel" is a misnomer. All that air travel stands for today is pure and simple transport. A person is

at one place at one moment and availing himself of the air service he is at another place the next moment. A passenger may be at Karachi early morning and in London the same day late at night, with nothing added to him either in the form of information, culture and contacts. This is just as much simple transport as in the case of merchandise, say a bale of cotton!

It may be argued that time is thereby saved. Does this mean that man's life has been added to? No, it only means that the man has transferred to himself another slice of his life to spend it on his own business from spending it on cultural pursuit. When we send a boy of school-going age, to look after herds in the jungle, are we saving time? We are depriving the boy of his share of culture. Life does not consist in spending our time all the time in our own business. [Man has to expand himself and come into contact with fellowmen as long as he wishes to remain a social being.] Air transport, therefore, reduces a man from being a social being into a mere individual. It enlarges, you may say, self-centredness. Time saved therefore, signifies transference of time from cultural pursuits to self-centred occupations. This can hardly be looked upon as an advantage when we take life to mean the richness in which it is lived in the cultural sense and not in the material sense. To put it in another way, one may say that it elongates the animal life and shortens the human aspect of it. This is the basis of solitary confinement. While travelling by air, the deafening noise of the propellers and the limited accommodation makes it almost impossible to carry on any conversation with the fellow passengers.

It is equivalent to the person being asked to sit in a chair in a drawing room with all the windows shut, conti-

nuously for the duration of the voyage. However comfortable the chair may be, the boredom becomes unbearable. One cannot look around because not only is the window space limited, but also nothing can be seen with the naked eye. The long distance planes travel 15 to 18 thousand feet above the ground. That means you can see objects at a distance of about three miles. Very often, therefore, one sees a misty blue below and a deep blue above and rarely can one recognize trees or even buildings excepting at the approach of landing places. With the mind shut and the eyes dim and the ears deafened, the traveller sits for hours together, night or day, and leaves the plane with an aching back, glad that his destination has been reached. This is "modern travel" !

As regards food, packets of victuals are provided at the meal hours. As yet India has not received recognition in the catering line. Whether the person is a vegetarian or not the packets are filled with cold non-vegetarian food. It is with much difficulty that one could procure an additional slice of bread and butter to meet one's needs. (It may be here suggested that it should be required of our Air Lines, calling at Indian air-ports, to cater for pure vegetarians also.)

One of the pleasures in fast travels, such as by motor car on the road or by train on the rails, is a sense of speed that man seems to crave for. The mere worm of man, dashing through the air at 40, 50 or 60 miles per hour, gets an exhilaration of doing that which he cannot physically perform. Even this joy is denied in air travel. Being so high up, even though the plane may be going at 300 miles per hour, one just sees the ground underneath passing away like gentle, idle clouds at a snail-slow speed. Hence even this human desire for quick motion remains unsatisfied.

If we look at the technical part of this mode of travel, we notice that it consumes tremendous quantities of petroluem. This fuel is in limited supply, as it is taken out from the bowels of the earth from various parts of the world. As the stock gets less and less, the consumers' desire to obtain control over other reservoirs becomes greater and greater. This ultimately leads to greed, jealousy, hatred and suspicion, culminating in global wars. Therefore, an undue increase in this method of travel conduces towards developing unhealthy relationship with our neighbours.

All this does not mean that there should be no air travel at all, but it only indicates its shortcomings and warns us that we should use it with the utmost caution. The socalled time saving is not in itself sufficient compensation to make up for the various disadvantages connected with it. The more accurate way of calling it, as we have suggested, would be "air transport", and that would probably convey what it stands for more accurately. In these days, what man needs most is relaxation. Air transport adds to the pressure on life.

Nov. 1947

—Gram Udyog Patrika

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G. L. 25

## VI

### HISTORY REPEATS

In many museums we find mummies of ancient Egyptian kings, who were styled Pharaohs. About 3,300 years ago, when these mummies were walking the earth as living human beings in Egypt, certain events took place. During my recent visit to Europe I was reminded forcibly of the way history repeats itself and how God's mills grind slowly but that they grind exceedingly small.

In those ancient days Egypt was a world power. It had organized its economic organization so that the Children of Israel were exploited as slaves. The Israelites were the workers and the Egyptians were the imperialists. The glory of Egypt of those days, when the pyramids were built, is yet to be excelled.

It is recorded in Exodus, the second book of the Bible that God raised Moses as a deliverer to set free the oppressed people of Israel from the bondage of Egypt. As always the top-dogs are unwilling to let go their grip on the under-dog the then Pharaoh of Egypt was unwilling to let the Israelites leave the land. God sent Moses to Pharaoh to tell him, "Let My people go that they may serve Me'.. Up to now the Israelites were serving the Egyptians. They produced material things and lived on what they were paid. God and higher things of life were not in the picture. Therefore, God wanted to give the oppressed a chance to develop their spiritual side and lead a higher form of human existence,

but the vested interest as represented by Pharaoh, was not willing to let them go. This conflict between the material and the spiritual in society led to a series of visitations. God afflicted the Egyptians with ten plagues.

Water was turned into blood. Thus one of the prime necessities of life, along with the fish in water, was put beyond the reach of the Egyptians.

The frogs bred so profusely as to fill the land which became a nuisance to the people.

The vermin spread all over the country making it a torture for the people and the cattle to lead a normal existence.

The fourth plague of flies not only affected the common people of Egypt, but also entered the palaces of the powers that be.

The fifth plague was the spread of diseases of the cattle which died in great numbers.

Then the country was visited with boils and blains and the people suffered terrible agonies.

The seventh plague was one of thunder and hail and fire which destroyed property and vegetation.

Then the locusts came and laid waste the fertile "gift of the Nile".

Then came darkness which engulfed the world.

After that came the terrible slaughter of the first-born.

After each one of these plagues Moses went to Pharaoh and renewed the request of God, "Let My people go that they may serve Me". When the Pharaoh was tired of each plague he promised delivery, but the moment the plague was taken out on the strength of his promise, it is recorded



that Pharaoh hardened his heart and went his old way. And after the tenth plague—the slaying of the first-born—the Israelites were allowed to go, but even then he changed his mind and pursued them and was drowned in the Red Sea which the Israelites were able to cross just before he did.

### MODERN VERSION

The whole of this history is being repeated in Europe today. Europe has been the exploiter of the world like the Egyptians and the people of other lands have groaned under their yoke. Even in their own lands the "haves" have exploited the "have-nots," but because of the material gains "the haves" have not been willing to let the workers have a chance of leading a normal life. God has been forgotten, higher moral values had no place in society. Greed, hatred, suspicion and large-scale murder has been the order of the day. God has been calling the common people to serve Him rather than serve Mammon, to live so that they may realize the higher things of life rather than merely for producing material goods, and this is the modern request of God, "Let My people go that they may serve me". The vested interests, like Pharaoh, have been hit hard by various plagues, every time they made up their mind to loosen their grips, but immediately the tribulation passed away they have hardened their hearts to go the same way again.

We have seen countries which were rich with food materials, countries which were exporting grain and were considered the granaries of the world, facing famine. Diseases and desolation have been stalking the land. Millions have died of flue and typhus. Snow, fire and floods have destroyed property and vegetation. London itself, like the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, has had a rain of fire about six years

ago, destroying much property. Even as the locust, the pilotless bombs have been the terror of the people, sending them into the bowels of the earth for safety. Darkness encompassed the world. Shortage of coal and electricity added to their discomforts. Millions died like the first-born of Egypt. The nurseries of "the haves", such as Oxford and Cambridge, were emptied during the wars to send their erstwhile inhabitants as lambs to the slaughter-house, and Europe today is desolate; but yet they have not the heart to abandon their old way of life and let go their grasp on material things. One wonders whether they would still go on and pursue the plan of exploiting the physically weak until, as Pharaoh was engulfed by the waters of the Red Sea, they are themselves overwhelmed and consumed by the atom bomb. The peoples of Europe have not yet realized that their sins are following them and that unless they repent they would be no more.

### THE PICTURE

It would not be possible to give a detailed picture of the whole of Europe but the most we can do is to draw rough sketches of the life in England at the present time. The last two wars have left scars which may not be eradicable for centuries to come.

During the battle of Great Britain thousands died and have been buried uncommemorated in common graves. There are huge gaps amongst the buildings in London. St Pauls Cathedral itself, which was hedged in by towering business houses, today stands amongst vast acres of devastated land. Lutgate-hill, Cheapside, Queen Victoria Street and all that area has been razed to the ground. Mercifully the public authorities have boarded up the roadside so that the public

may not gaze on these mortal wounds. These boarded up walls of wood carry to day picturesque advertisements to make the people forget their experiences and pursue pleasure as their goal ! Great many churches in London are mere shells today. Only the towers and spires remain to mark their site. This seems a parable to declare to mankind that the aisles, which accommodated comfortable seats for the worshippers to doze while the services were going on, have been consumed by the flames, and the spires, which represented man's aspiration towards the higher and nobler aspects of life, have been left untouched. In fashionable London, in restaurants there is no cloth to cover the tables, and even if they had there is not enough soap to keep the cloth washed and clean. Hence they have to resort to paper table-cloths and napkins. During the seige of Great Britain, that country was faced with starvation. The prime necessity of life, food, was not to be had. Even to-day there is considerable shortage in food and clothing and other consumer goods. The pre-war uniformed taxi-drivers were nowhere to be seen. Today these taxi-cabs are being driven by men in civilian clothes and with soft felt hats. In many places the food shortage is so great that tourists are not allowed. Railway travel is a torture. The third class in England is as expensive as the first class in India. Yet one has to make long journeys often standing in the corridors.

Are these not the modern plagues of Egypt to a land that was overflowing with material good things of the world, but which represent ultimately the ill-gotten profits of an Empire maintained with the aid of armaments and resorting to violence and wars ? Profits and money have been objects of worship rather than God, and those higher things of life resulting in love to our fellowmen.

## LESSONS

Unfortunately, all these tribulations have left Europe to harden her heart. She is not willing to change her mode of life. She is not willing to adjust her economic organization so that men may live in peace. She is not willing to let her trade go. Though it has been smashed to bits, yet she clings pathetically to the hope of building it up again on the same old foundations.

### THE VAIN EFFORTS

One who would look at Europe today will not fail to realize that about 150 years of mass-scale production, on a standardized basis, with a centralized organization, at a feverish rate, has ultimately led to the sorry spectacle that Europe presents today. There is dire distress, strained human relations, fear and hatred surcharging the atmosphere and with little hope for the future. If this is the result of the methods of production that have been pursued in the past, is it not time that we take stock of our ways of life and mend them laying emphasis more on the human relations than on material production ?

### WARS DESTRUCTIVE

Our experience has proved to the hilt that the terrible wars that are necessary concomitants of the present economic organization of the West, is a ferocious consumer. It destroys at a rate at which people can never hope to have all they need. This being so, we have to eliminate the destructive part of the present economic structure. That would mean readjustment of the basis of social existence. Are we prepared to face the realities as they are presented by the picture of Europe today ?

## DANGEROUS DOCTRINES

Their high priests of worldly wisdom are promulgating dangerous doctrines. Public leaders like Lord Halifax are expounding the theory that it is not possible to combine Christian ideals in public affairs. According to him, public life would follow the development of the masses, and therefore, would have much lower moral standards than the values which could be practised by the leading individuals. It is stated that it is impossible to hope to organize society on Christian principles. Christian principles are kept aloof for individuals to aspire to and not to be permeated into the everyday life of the nation.

Are these not signs that the lessons of the last two wars have not gone home and that the people are treading again on the dangerous paths which have brought about the conflagration of not only Europe but also most parts of the world? Are we still hankering for the "flesh-pots of Egypt?" Do we wish to lay emphasis on a complicated standard of life entailing the exploitation of the masses so that we may live in luxury or are we willing to "let them go so that they may serve God" through living a life that will bring peace and plenty to our fellowmen?

India stands at the threshold of a new era. Shall we learn from the plagues of Egypt, the evils of serving Mammon forsaking the higher things of life? What shall our future be? Let the experience of Europe teach us that there is no salvation in production for production sake in heaping up material goods. Peace and goodwill among men are far more important. Will India give the lead and point the way of self-sufficiency as the high road to freedom from wants and oppression?

## VII

### PEACE AND POSSESSIONS

At the Diocesan Conference at York, His Grace the Archbishop is reported to have said, "Britain must be armed if the peace of the world is to be preserved" and reinforced his arguments with the words that "an unarmed nation with great possessions was an incentive to aggressive nations, and an unarmed nation had little influence in world decisions."

The Prince of Peace taught us that life does not consist in the abundance of things we possess, that we were to do good to them that despitefully used us, and that we were not to lose the soul even if it be to gain the whole world, and when Satan tempted Him with the kingdoms of the earth He turned him away scornfully saying: "Get thee behind me, Satan. Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and Him only shalt thou serve".

Here is a Prelate of the Church today preaching just the opposite. Great Britain has great possessions and she should have influence in the Council of Nations. For these she needs armed forces to kill all who come in the way of the realization of her greed. Is this the path of peace? Jesus counselled the young ruler with great possessions to sell all he had and distribute it to the poor. Would he not advise Great Britain today to unburden herself of all this superfluous wealth and restore it back to the poverty-stricken millions who are languishing for the lack of the very needs of life?

Alongside of this comes the news that Dr. Hugh Dalton, the British Chancellor of the Exchequer, placed on record in Parliament the "clear judgment" of the British Government that they do not recognize the moral validity of the war debts to Egypt. Are moral considerations a matter of convenience ?

World peace can never be achieved by injustice or might. All the tribulation humanity has passed through in the last two global wars does not appear to have brought this truth home to our leaders. Shall we never learn even with all this bitter experience ?

*July 20, 1947*

*—Harijan*

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## VIII

### WILL IT BRING PEACE

With 7000 tons of high explosives the fortifications of Heligoland were blown up. When the Great Fire of London destroyed its congested, dingy streets, London emerged as a healthier and finer city. Will this blowing up of old fortifications not be an opportunity for the unsuppressible Germans to build better and more up-to-date defences and use them for the future offensive?

This method of approach to ensure peace is short-sighted and treats the symptoms rather than the disease. The cause lies deeper in the economic organisation based on greed. If we are to assure the world freedom from periodic upheavals, we ought to set right our daily mode of life. Unless we attack the problem at this end it will never be solved.

*11th May, 47*

*—Harijan.*

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## IX

## THE CHALLENGE CUP

Speaking at San Francisco, Mr. Henry Wallace threw out three suggestions for "the abolition of war". His first suggestion is that there should be a military settlement providing for the world control of atomic energy, internationalization of strategic areas, disarmament in weapons for man's destruction and development of a world security system. His second suggestion is for a political settlement, liquidating Fascism, terminating civil wars in Greece and China and for the attainment of the aspirations of unfree peoples. His last is a ten-year economic programme of reconstruction, administered by the United Nations Agency. But with all these hopeful schemes he says in desperation that he finds "the will lacking". He adds: "We can and must find the will. The devastated and hungry world is crying out, not for guns and tanks to spread hunger but for ploughs and machines to fulfil the promise of peace."

Surely, the former United States Vice-President is aware that however good his suggestions may be as a remedy for the world's ills, they will be futile as long as the root cause of the world's ailment is allowed to remain. Before prescribing the remedy it is necessary to diagnose the disease.

At this hour of the day most people will not need to be told that the cause of this hunger and devastation is not the atom bomb, nor any weapons of man and that no security

agreement can form a bulwark against the repetition of the holocaust this generation has suffered. The trouble is deep-seated and needs drastic surgical measures.

As long as the present system of economic organization whereby it becomes imperative to control sources of fuel, raw materials and supply of labour and ensure adequate markets for finished goods, persists it would follow as night the day that control over other people's lives will be an essential feature of the world order. This system will inevitably call for violence and that of an increasing and novel type. This will guarantee the race to the swiftest in devising ways and means of terrorizing fellow-beings.

An American news agency sends a message that the United States military authorities are testing the possibilities of a deadlier atomic weapon than the atom bomb. This hellish device is the radio-active cloud which is promised to be so Satanic as to win the challenge cup for the most violent. This race will go on unless the nations are willing to adopt economic methods which will not entail violence as a means of working it.

June 15, 1947

—Harijan

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## X

# THE WIND AND THE WHIRLWIND

What is called progress and civilization to-day is a Marathon race where the laurels are for the most devilish. When in the opening years of this century the Japanese defeated the Russians, the former was hailed as a World Power. When France could not outbid the violence of Germany she lost her status as a Power. The criterion is the achievement to perfection of savagery and barbarism. The latest distinction on this unenviable career has been attained by the users of the abomination of desolation—the Atomic Bomb. We do not grudge America or Great Britain their claim to such hellish greatness for we know as certainly as night follows day, these demons of today will, in their turn, perish by the sword. But this is not what needs detain us. These are only passing phases. The history of Great Britain is but as a grain of sand on the shores of time.

Why is it that all science runs a-whoring after violence and destruction? Is humanity on a downward grade? Is violence becoming our purpose in life? What are the causes that make violence dominate the life of the world today? These are some of the questions that should rack our brains.

If we probe deep enough we shall find that the development of the higher nature of man—character and personality—is not keeping pace with the advance made by his mental faculty. A spirited horse has to be held in by

bit and bridle. We cannot afford to give loose reins. Man's self-control is being lost relative to the advancement made by science. Science we need but when it outstrips man's character and upsets the poise it makes a slave of man and generates violence. Then what is the remedy if we are not to sow the wind and reap the whirlwind ?

There is a time lag between the development of human personality and the advancement of mental faculties. The former is a slow process as all things with a permanent value tend to be. We cannot hand a child an open flaming torch. The child will be in danger of setting itself on fire. Fire is good. It has lighted the way of human progress. But it is out of place in the hands of an immature person. When the situation points to a tragedy it is time for us to call a halt. Science is good. But we seem to have reached a stage where we need bivouac a while to take stock of the situation and pull ourselves together if we are determined not to let circumstances run away with our lives. Have we the strength to do it ? Or will humanity roll headlong downhill gathering irresistible momentum and dash itself to pieces against the rocks ahead ?

This question is not an international one only. It arises in our every day life in various forms. In the final analysis the question machine Vs. human labour in our country is of the same origin. As things are mechanical advancement has gone so far ahead of the development of human personality that man is becoming a greater and greater slave to the machine that he is in imminent danger of losing himself. When people say that we of the non-violent school are against machinery they are uttering a truth in a relative setting. Machines are good but if we have not developed sufficient

control over ourselves they will lead us into the paths of violence and destruction. All this feverish planning for rapid industrialisation as a post-war reconstruction based on capital goods imported from abroad is sure to lead us along the way all industrialised countries have gone—on the high road of violence, imperialism and destruction. Discretion dictates caution. Shall we heed it? Or shall we in our pride of achievement head for a fall?

Sep. 1945

—Gram Udyog Patrika

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