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ALL-INDIA VILLAGE INDUSTRIES ASSOCIATION

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PEOPLE'S CHINA WHAT I SAW AND LEARNT THERE

Ву

J. C. Kumarappa



MAGANVADI, WARDHA, M. P. 1952

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PEOPLE'S CHINA WHAT I SAW AND LEARNT THERE

Though our stay in China was only six weeks, the organizing genius of the Chinese elongated it into an equivalent of six months by a crowded programme. They allowed each one of us to study whatever interested us, and afforded ample facilities for our purpose. In this note I can only record my observations and impressions, sketchy though they may be.

I left Delhi for Peking on September 20, as a member of the Indian Goodwill Mission, to attend the anniversary celebrations of the People's Republic of China. When I first received the invitation on 13th of September, I was in Seldoh village and was reluctant to leave the work I was doing there. I was, however, pursuaded by my co-workers in Maganvadi to take the opportunity to study the land problem in China and then to go to Japan to study its cottage industries.

Calcutta

Our first halt was at Calcutta where we were to change from the Indian National Airways to the B. O. A. C.

We had dinner at the Chinese Consulate General that night. There were some six different strong drinks and fish, pork, beef, mutton, prawns, chicken and duck cooked in various fashions. Poor me, had to meekly look on with 'watering mouth' at the Brahmin members enjoying themselves with the food and drinks to their capacity. I had to content with

hastily got ready after sitting down to eat at the table. But as I do not eat at night I could be happy just nibbling away at these to keep company. The food left behind could have fed another half-a-dozen. I was amazed at this lavish hospitality at a Communist Legation! I wondered if this is what happens at all our embassies and legations which would amply account for the fabulous expenses incurred over these establishments.

Should poor countries like China and India vie with rich countries like the U.S. A. and U.K. in such lavish entertainments? Then we raise our holy hands in horror at the extravagance of our villagers!

We left Calcutta on the 21st September and broke journey at Rangoon that night and left next morning for Hongkong via Bangkok.

Hongkong

We reached Hongkong in the evening. We were put up at the Sunning House Hotel. The Service in the Indian Hotels was servile with an eye to tips. But the Chinese servants in Hongkong were cheerful, with a smile on their faces and held their heads erect as equals. The difference was striking. They were proud of their New China, welcomed us and behaved as though they were themselves our hosts.

The next morning I went out for a walk to see for myself what Hongkong was like in the poor section. I went to where I thought there would be filth and dirt—fish and meat bazaars and vegetable stalls. I was amazed. I did not see a fly or a crow or a kite--the well recognised scavengers of dirt in the East. The streets were clean

though the people were poor, some were even living on the pavements. There was no spitting or any other human refuse, nor smells except that of the natural dry fish etc. I have not seen a city as clean as this outside the West. Why, some parts of London may well take lessons from this city. This place is British, but the population is poor Chinese, whose living conditions are not much different from those on the pavements of our cities. We, too, have had Britishers managing our cities and yet they are filthy. Therefore the difference must be looked for in the cooperation of the Chinese. In the evening we left by steamer for Canton. On this steamer, after nearly two days, we saw flies at tea-time and my companions exclaimed, "Look, Look, two flies!"

Canton

The spirit of New China was evident on this Chinese boat. I had talks with the crew who were filled with enthusiasm. The Chief Steward, Lee Chea Ming, thought that unity was the chief feature of New China. He said, "Cantonese or Pekinese we do not care, China is all one. Everybody works and eats. In India, too, there should be no Punjab, no Bombay, no Madras. All India should be one. Only then all will be well and happy", When can we acquire this political wisdom? The more I saw of China the more I admired their national spirit.

Canton, though poorer than Honkong, its cleanliness was equally striking. There were no beggars, flies, crows or stray dogs. The streets were well swept. The traffic constables had their mouths and noses covered like surgeons at an operating theatre. The street traffic consisted argely of cycles, cycle-rickshaws and bases. There were

some cars but mostly these belonged to the State. There were no taxis or private cars in evidence. There were no conspicuous rich, all were more or less alike. Canton also presented a festive appearance because of the artistic and colourful shop-signs in Chinese.

It is a big city almost as large as Calcutta. There were no waste lands in it. Even in the city portion of it all available space was cultivated. The Chinese are extremely industrious unlike us. As I took a walk among the poor bye-lanes, every where I found mothers busy in the morning washing their children.

We visited Nau Fung, the People's University, which had about 5,000 students. The students here are given free boarding, lodging, tuition and clothes. It is open to the poorest of the poor. The system is the same old regimented form of education. This is calculated to bring quick results but not lasting ones it seemed to me. For character formation we need smaller units where the teachers and the taught come into close contact, Besides village location would be preferable as it would add to the environmental contribution towards social outlook of the young.

To keep the city clean they have formed units of ten houses. The residents of these houses are held responsible for the cleanliness of their surroundings,

The people were definitely poorer looking than at Hongkong. There were no painted lips or gaudy or expensive clothes, but the faces were full of hope and cheer. One missed the outstretched hand of the beggar that one met with even in Hongkong. All people looked alike, there being no marked difference outwardly between the rich and the poor or the classes and the masses. The way they went about indicated purposiveness and energy. Smoking and drinking is moderation seem to be universal among men and

women. These are mild evils when we remember their opium eating background forced on them by the British. They observe no Purda system.

Early in the mornings, as is my wont, I walked through the back streets, what we would call "Conservancy lanes". There were overseers watching the tidying up. Everything was perfectly clean already. There had been no nuisance committed. The children were being washed or bathed and fed. They had mostly fish, meat and rice cakes for breakfast, which food was freshly cooked and put on sale at most street corners. Even at these eating stalls I noticed no dirt or flies.

The shops were stocked full of necessaries, shoes, soaps, tooth paste and austerity clothing. Chemicals were from the U.S. A. or the U.K. while the textiles were from Shanghai. All name boards of shops were in Chinese only. Prices were strictly fixed and marked on the goods.

While we were visiting the People's Public Swimming Bath in a newly made park, one of our members slowly fell back from the party and was moving towards the bushes. Our Chinese guide noticed this and asked me why this friend was lagging behind. I euphemistically suggested he may be looking out for a toilet! Immediately the guide ran after him and offered to take him to a toilet room. Our colleague said, "Don't bother, I shall finish my business behind some bush nearby." The guide, replied "Please don't. We don't allow such things in our New China". Here is a lesson for us.

Peking

As there is no Air Mail or passenger service in China, the Chinese Government sent a plane from Peking to Canton

to bring the whole of the Indian Goodwill Mission to the Capital. We took our sandwiches and aerated waters for the journey and reached Peking on the 26th September, evening. The air-ports were but glorified huts, the runways were not concreted but only tarred. There was complete simplicity.

We were lodged at the "Peking Hotel". All these old time high class hotels, where "Dogs and Chinese" were not allowed formerly, have been converted into dormitories for volunteers and workers. A floor or so is kept reserved for State and honoured guests from afar. The hotels provide both European and Chinese style food.

In my usual early morning walks, alone in the bye-paths and "conservancy" back lanes, Jfound everything spick and span as in Canton.

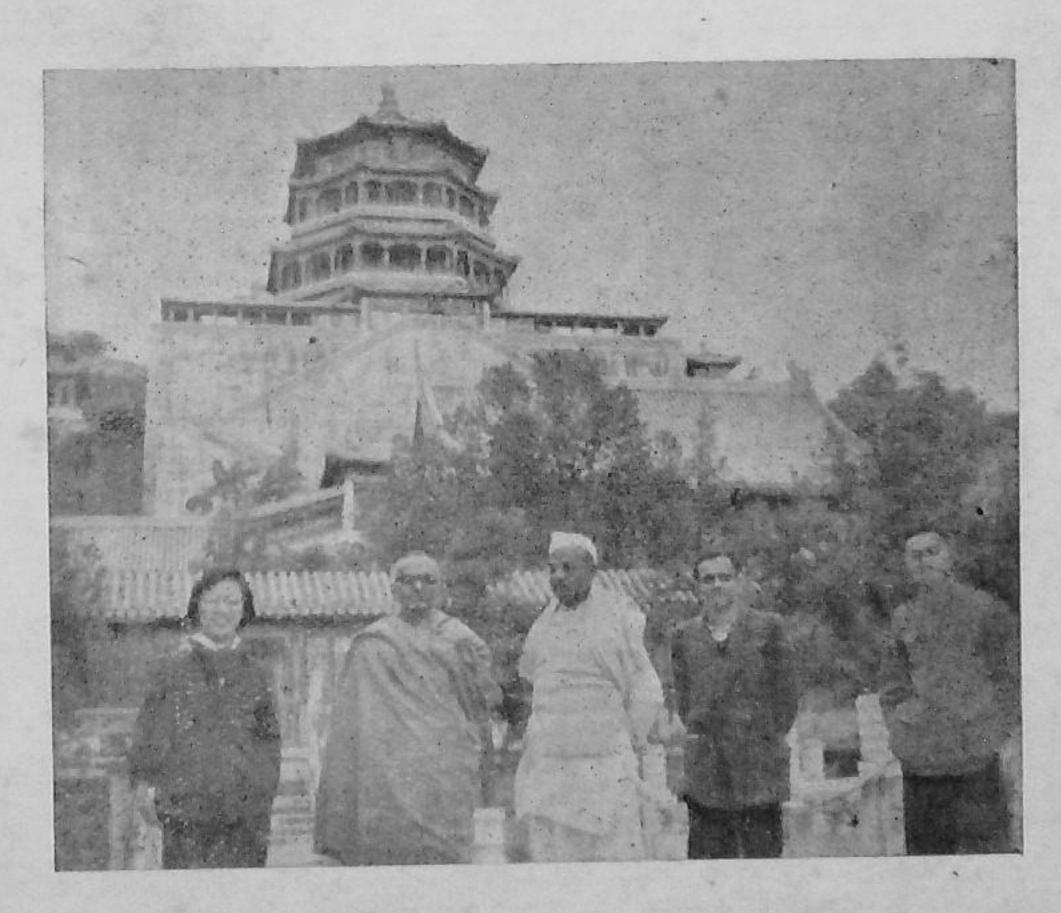
traffic. There were a few more Government motor vehicles in Peking than at Canton, but all the same the stench of burnt lubricating oil and petrol smell were not there. Though the city was clear of human dirt it was very dusty. The eating places were full as at Canton and as clean.

The metropolis was getting dressed up for the celebrations of the 1 st of October. The Sergeants were drilling the volunteers but with a smile on their faces. People were marching with a gusto.

Everyone, man or woman, was in navy blue uniform. One missed the usual colourful Chinese dress one expects to see in such a capital. The nation seems to have rolled up its sleeve for national reconstruction. When we attended the National Banquet, though the whole affair was beautiful, it was yet simple and the guests were all ressed in their work-a-day clothes—they had nothing else,



At the Summer Palace- Peking



At the base of the Summer Palace Yi Ho Yuan—Peking

Our delegation was there to show off their finery in the true Rastrapathi Bhavan style! It appeared ludicrous.

For the celebrations they were expecting millions from the surrounding villages. Hence elaborate preparations were made everywhere for water and trench latrines of our type on the pavements. The arrangements were perfect and the people displayed unimaginable discipline. One wonders if this discipline, which seems to be a national trait, has been acquired through ancestor; worship. Their power of organization is marvellous. Why is India the opposite number in these qualities?

The erstwhile aristocratic palaces were being used as public places wherein some of the volunteers were housed. Yet the old furniture and rich upholstery were left untouched and everything was in tact. In India such things would be torn, dirtied or stolen.

The Celebrations

We watched the celebrations of the 1st of October in Peking. Over a million persons must have marched past Chairman Mao. We were on the Stand from 9.30 a.m. to 4 p.m. The Military, army, navy and the air-forces took about one hour and a half. Then the workers, railway and industrial labour, farmers, villagers, school and college students etc. all went past. There was perfect order and discipline. Their enthusiasm was unbounded.

A people with this spirit will never be slaves. By comparison India suffers. It seems presumptuous on our part to think that India leads the East; China is miles ahead of us. There is a singleness of purpose and an iron determination to achieve it. Nothing can stop them now. We

have neither a goal nor a purpose and we lack drive. There is food everywhere in plenty and also other prime necessaries at extremely low prices. Of course, there is inflation, but the Government has devised ways and means of getting over it. It has an intelligent administration which has the whole-hearted backing of the people. All wear the same type of clothes and live alike. There is not much of a range between the highest and the lowest.

Russia and China

Soviet Communism started and ended with the Proletariat. The Czar's Court set the example of material enjoyment. So the Bolshevik regime that followed emphasised large scale standardised production, while China has rightly started with placing the peasantry on their feet. They have widely distributed the land among the actual tillers and left them to manage their lands themselves. Even the rich peasants were left untouched.

The present attitude of the Chinese Government to private property, profit and private enterprise makes them anything but Communistic. Their Central Government, too, is not wholly composed of Communists but contains only 31% of them. Hence it is wholly wrong to call China "Communist" at present. There are newspapers in China, especially in Shanghai, which represent other points of view. There is no doubt the Communistic group is powerful and influential but they are not all.

China has drawn freely on Russian experience but has not followed the Soviets blindly. The Russian experts are there to help China where and when wanted, but do not boss the country as patrons or as superiors. Even Russian Military experts are under the Chinese Command.

On the whole China is solving her problems according to her lights rationally.

The Russian revolution was pivoted on the proletariat while China is rebuilding on the peasantry. The difference is not one of degree but in kind. The result is there is no Communism in China of the type we associate with the Soviet, and Russia is not as influential in moulding Chinese policies as we imagine. In many ways the Chinese revolution is a lesson to us. Even in the industrial sector, only the parasitic capitalist is liquidated while other industrialists are encouraged to carry on. Their way of solving their problems is very rational. In all their reforms they try to carry the common people with them. The Chinese are a marvellously practical people.

Method of Approach

The Chinese method of bringing about Communism is very different from the Russian. Russia used violence to change straight away from imperialism to Communism. They sent all their landlords and imperialistic families to Siberia and confiscated their property. This was followed by pure dictatorship. Russia believes in producing lots of materials because they think that such goods will increase the standard of living and the sorrows of the people will be thereby removed. Because of the belief in material advancement of the people, they took over the factories and started manufacturing on large scale. Hence they concentrated on what has come to be called "The Proletariat" and the Russian Economic order came to be based on the proletariat.

China, on the other hand, wants to make the nation into a family giving to all prime needs of life like food,

are necessary for the happiness and well being of a family. And therefore, China started with land reform, while Russia built on proletarian reform. Russia started building with the second storey, but China started with the foundation of the structure. They have dug deep for the foundation. Thus the organization of Russia and the organization of China are fundamentally different.

Mao, have done is that they have taken all the land into their hands and distributed it to those who actually till the soil. So at the present time the lands are in private hands and mostly in the hands of very small farmers. Every man cultivates what he needs and what he wants. For the poor people there should be hope in this type of Communism, wherein the whole community becomes one family.

Russian Help

We are told that China is being largely influenced and run by Russia. That again is not true. In China there are not many Russians. Such as are there, are there to help the Chinese. There are Russian Generals and Colonels to train the army. Such officers are completely under the Military command of China.

China invited Russians as technicians just like India has invited Americans. Because we have Americans to help us in technical work, can it be said that we are under Americans? The Chinese are imitating neither Russian industries nor capitalistic industries. They want, first of all, to increase land production and find food and clothing for the poor people.

In Canton they banished prostitution in a few months by putting all the women concerned to productive occupations. The people took popular feeling at flood-tide which carried them over many difficulties. In our land the high tides created by Gandhiji were allowed to ebb away and it has left us in the mire high and dry,

Democratic Dictatorship

To talk of "Communist China" is like styling India "Gandhian". We are aspiring to become "Gandhites". Similarly the Chinese are aspiring to become "Communists".

The Chinese people fall into five groups. (1) Bourgeois, (2) National Bourgeois, (3) Petty Bourgeois, (4) Workers and (5) Peasants. The bourgeois are big capitalists and they are international exploiters. They do not mind trading in foreign goods and joining hands with America, England or any other country to make money for themselves even at the sacrifice of their nation's interest.

The National Bourgeois, even though capitalists, are national minded. They want to work for the nation; at the same time they want also to make money for themselves.

The Petty Bourgeois are professors, doctors, engineers, petty tradesmen, etc. The Petty Bourgeois incline to throw in their lot with the workers and peasants, and we know who these latter fare. These three, the Petty Bourgeois. Workers and Peasants, rule China. They form 80 to 85% of the population. They are the "democrats" and they dictate to the other two groups and that is why they call their Government "Democratic Dictatorship". The last three groups are supposed to plan and the others to do what they dictate. So they have started with the flower

groups, who make rules and regulations, and the others have to follow them. But this is not ideal Communism.

Communism

In ideal Communism everything is sought to be managed as in a family. The way from Capitalism to ideal Communism can be divided into three stages, (1) Dictatorships. (2) Socialism or State Communism and (3) ideal Communism. Ideal Communism is the most developed socialistic form of order. In State Communism the Government does everything for the pople and there is State ownership and a large measure of control. The Government becomes common and there is no private profit or private property.

When on the other hand the Community, not the State, owns everything and does everything, we have ideal Communism,. There need be no Government as such except to see that everything is in order.

Under Chiang Kai-Shek's regime the Bourgeois were laying down the plan of action as it suited them. But Mao and his followers did not see salvation in such a programme. They felt that the people's interests should receive first priority. Their aim was to bring democracy to the common people who should then decide what is best for their welfare. Such a programme, originating from the workers and peasants, was to be enforced on the Bourgeois group. This is the first step which they term 'Democratic Dictatorship'. This they have achieved with the cooperation of the people and by driving out the previously existing Chiang Regime—the Bourgeois Dictatorship. This is their present position where the least amongst them is taken care of. The nation, how-

ever, is not running on its own steam but is being towed along by a group of seasoned leaders.

The Communists, unlike our Congress, are extremely strict in enforcing discipline. Their punishments are severe as the following list will show:

For corruption and bribery - Upto capital punishment

- Capital punishment with
two years' probation
when it may be reduced
to life sentence.

Democratic Dictatorship is the first stage on this pilgrimage to ideal Communism. In China today, all the well defined signs of Communism, as ordinarily understood, are absent. There private profit, private property and private enterprise are allowed.

Thus, the so called Communism of the Chinese is not really Communism of the evil type which the Americans dread. Communism run in a proper way can be a good thing. If we avoid violence in Communism, it will be ideal. Like Sarvodaya, Communism also strives to serve everybody.

The Future Programme

The next step in their programme is to attain Socialism or State Communism where the state will run or control all activities.

From this they hope to proceed to full fledged Communism where the State will yield place to the people as a whole. This is their ideal of Communism-a kind of national joint family. Only at this stage China will call itself Communistic. At present they do not regard themselves fit to

be called Communists excepting for a few top ranking leaders who have "attained."

Where are We?

With this analysis when we look at India, we too are working towards Ram Raj. We have not yet got out of the Bourgeois Dictatorship stage. We have slipped out of the Foreign Bourgeois Dictatorship and are, at present, in the National Bourgeois Dictatorship. This has to go yielding place to Democratic Dictatorship. Then we Shall have two more stages to go!

The Chinese have not considered the use of a non-violent method. So they are yet a way off the Gandhian route. In spite of it all, their burning patriotism is worth emulation and their attainments are praiseworthy. Their goal appears to me to be like that of Sarvodaya without the emphasis that we place on non-violence. Some of us stand aghast at the use of violence in the Chinese revolution. China has not foresworn violence, and all forms of Government do imply violence. We hope, in time, their leaders will come to realize that the violent way, though it may appear to be a short cut, does not really solve any problem in the end. What a leadership it would have been for the world had they based their programme on non-violence!

We, in our turn, would do well to profit by China's experiments and achievements, and solve our problems as best suited to our conditions under the powerful flash light of Non-violence and Truth provided by Gandhiji, and wish China every success in her efforts to work out her own salvation.

The Russian novelist M. Ilya Ehrenburg, a top-ranking offical propagandist for Soviet Russia, asked at an



At the Temple of Heaven-Peking

interview, why India, a country which is definitely a peace loving country, does not take an important role in International Peace Conferences of Pacifist bodies. I replied to him as follows:—

War and Peace

"Our approach is different in that our philosophy and national culture lead us to the reform of individual life. We diagnose war as a social disease caused by the violence in individuals, which, in the aggregate, leads to global outbursts. Therefore, dealing with wars as such is symptomatic treatment leaving out the real cause. Disarmament and treaties will not solve the problem finally. We feel that wars are an essential concomitant of creating an artificial standard of wants and trying to meet them by centralized production. Such an artificial standard stimulates greed and jealousy and creates hatred between nations which ultimately culminates in war. Therefore, India's approach, especially under Gandhiji's lead, is to work for permanent peace. But it is a long time programme affecting the very basis of economic life." To this he replied, "When a murderer comes into the house to kill a child, will it not be the Gandhian way to save the child?" I replied, "I am afraid your analogy is faulty. We must deal with the cause, If the murderer is attracted to do his deed by something on the child-a piece of jewellery-then if we prevent one murderer still others may be attracted. So the problem is not solved that way. Wars are like floods. Floods are the accumulation of little drops of rain water. We may build dams at great cost to control floods. Even then if the dams burst there will be great destruction. The proper way to control floods is at the stage of the rain drops. If we plough the land the rain drops are retained in the soil and fertilize the land. If we plant forests then also the rain water is not allowed to run away, but goes into the soil to be used as spring water later on. The land acts as a reservoir to restrain the water from forming destructive floods. Small erosion bunds also do the same. Such work is not spectacular but it is none-theeffective for all that. Gandhiji's method is that of conserving the rain drops and utilizing them to good purpose rather than allowing them to accumulate into floods causing widespread distress. The Constructive Programme he has left behind is an enormous force for world peace, far more formidable than any appeals Peace Conferences can make. The only difficulty is we are not willing to pay the price of leading a simple life. We live in such a way as will cause wars and then lift our holy hands in prayer to ask God to save us from war and destruction. Is this not a mockery? We may have the short cut too, but it must be backed by the long term plan of changing our lives to breed Peace."

Production

The Chinese have an inborn sense of orderliness and a certain amount of discipline in them. Therefore they find it easier to organize themselves. Though it is only about two years since the present Government has been in power, yet within these months, they have organized themselves well.

Land Reform

They appear to have made a very realistic approach to the problem of Agrarian Reform. They have not blindly followed Soviet Russia but have learnt valuable lessons from the Russian experiment. There is no community ownership of land. Private property is the rule of the day but the use of land is strictly controlled by the State,

Private profit, though strictly limited, is still the motive force and provides the needed incentive for production; Parasitic landlordism has been abolished but rich peasants, who cultivate, are left untouched. Till now tenants gave away the major part of the produce as the landlord's share. This has been stopped, so the cultivator enjoys the full benefit of his labour. Land tax comes to about 13% of the produce and is collected in kind. This is one of the major steps taken in China to deal with inflation. Government pays its administrators, military personnel and teachers in kind. There is no terrorism excepting in the case of landlords who attempt a violent revolt. The lands of such have been confiscated. But to those who wish to till the soil, the same rehabilitation measures given to other farmers, are extended. Formerly there were shortages of all kinds of prime necessities. The reason for this shortage of prime necessicies was the fact that then land was in the hands of absentee landlords who demanded 75 to 80 per cent of the produce from their tenants. So the tenants had to live on 25 to 20 per cent of the produce and with any byeproduct that they managed to get from the land. Naturally, there was no incentive for them to produce more when bulk of the produce went to the landlord. Now that the land has been made over to the tenant, they produce what they like and improve their land. Consequently the production has gone up.

Within a short period the Chinese have been able, with ruthless determination, to eradicate blackmarketing and corruption left behind as a legacy by the Chiang-Kai-Shek regime.

System of Remuneration

Most Administrators and officers in New China are paid in kind. There are two ways of paying remuneration to officers. One is on a salary consideration and the other is on a supply basis. They do not pay remuneration purely in terms of money. The amount is fixed as so many Pailies of wheat or Cattis of rice. When paid in money, the salary therefore, varies according to the prevailing price of wheat or rice. If the price goes down the salary also will go down and if the price increases the salary will also go up.

As it happened there were two Cabinet Ministers with me when I was travelling. One was on supply basis and the other on salary. I asked the Minister who was on supply basis, "Why are you on supply basis?" He replied. "I have too many children to live on a salary"! When one is on supply basis, all the children are taken care of by the Government—education, clothing, medical attendance etc. The man, who is on supply basis, is looked after very much like the prisoners are in jail. Every month he will get so many pailies of wheat, so many pieces of wahing soap, toilet soap, 20 packets of cigarettes etc., and two sets of clothes in the year.

Chairman Mao himself gets only the equivalent of 2,800 Catties of millets, a house and the use of a car. (a Catty is 1.3 lbs.). At the most it may work out to about Rs. 600/- per month. I was talking to two Cabinet Ministers who were each getting the equivalent of about Rs. 450/- per month. The volunteers, who looked after us, got about one third of that. Now we can see how China has leaders who share the life of the people. The spirit that pervades there is like that we had in India in 1931.

Inflation

The Government takes by way of taxes 13 per cent in kind from the farmers, as already stated. With this produce they are able to control inflation. When the price goes up for the produce in the market the people buy from the Government stock causing the price in the market to come down. When the price is low the people buy from the market and so naturally the price goes up. In this way the Government regulates inflation.

Education

Freviously education was a luxury open only to the rich. In New China it has been made a necessity available to every citizen. Formerly the schools and colleges were run on endowments, fees etc. But now Government assumes the whole responsibility for education of the young. They are attempting to relate education with life. The Army itself is looked upon as a service corps. Soldiers off duty help peasants in their work,

We visited the Peking Municipal Eighth Middle School. There they attempt to correlate academic subjects to the National Revolutionary Programme. Pupils are encouraged to take part in constructive work. They took a live interest in the Korean affair, collected money, worked for the Anti-American Aggression Movement and did a good deal of manual work. I was reminded of the part Rastriya Vidyapithe played during our Satyagraha Movements.

Emancipation of women is going forward by great strides. Bound feet are yielding place to Cabinet Ministers. In every walk of life this is noticeable excepting in that of rickshaw pullers.!

In most places they have a thorough going democratic organization for the various trades and occupations. They meet periodically and discuss their affairs. Prompt action is taken to stop any deviation from the regulations laid down. Summary proceedings may even land the offenders in jail within a few hours of committing the offence, Black marketeers are dealt with drastically.

Cottage Industries

Cottage Industries are at a discount with the administrators though they are prevalent everywhere. The craftmanship is of a high order. Let us hope this madness for centralization does not bring disaster to the large numbers still engaged in decentralized industries. There is still hand spinning in the interior village but Shanghai mills are fast spreading their tentacles. New China will have to look out that the National Bourgeois do not replace the foreign Bourgeois. With their programms of interlocking the urban and rural parts there is a lurking danger of the urban swallowing up the rural. Village self-sufficiency, which is a feature of China, is threatened with extinction. The village craftsmen are as poor as their prototypes in India though they have much more to eat.

The Cooperative organization is spreading because the people feel the need to get together. Government do not enforce it but extend every help when demanded by the people.

There is no collective farming. In the North the Government is carrying on one or two experiments in collectives but not with much success. The farmers generally use mules and horses in the North and donkeys, buffaloes and bullocks in the South. The cattle seem to be mostly of a mixed breed from European stud bulls.



A three Spindle Charka in a village

Most of the hills are denuded of vegetation but strenuous efforts are being made to reafforest them,

Mukden

We left Peking for Mukden by train on the 10th October.

Railway Travel

The Railway tracks were largely destroyed during the Civil and Japanese wars, but they have been all restored. Excepting for a few sentries near Mukden the old belligerent appearance has gone.

The lines are broad gauge. The locomotives and carriages have very small wheels, yet the Mail train speed averages about 35 miles per hour because of the few stoppages. They run to time,

Very good food is supplied in railway stations. At a station opposite our compartment, there were food vendors. In their sale-cases covered with glass, I counted about 8 dozen chickens roasted and well prepared. They sold them at about Rs. 2/— each. They also had Chinese steamed bread like 'Iddalis' and portions of cooked vegetables in individual mud pots, fruits tied in strings, and various sweet dishes. I have never seen, outside the U. S. A., such quantities of food at such low rates. The vendors had their noses and mouths masked and wore white aprons or overalls. They had bamboo forceps with which they handled the food stuff. The prices were all marked. There was no talking or crying out. Everything was quiet and orderly on the platform.

The bogies, being corridor corriages, had only two doors. As the engine stopped at the pump to take water each carriage found its place of the platform, with the doors

an entrance and the other was the exit. Incoming passengers lined up at the entrance and the outgoing ones marched out of the station in order. The food vendors are kept within these two lines between the exit and entrance doors. I have not seen such orderliness and organization in Europe, England or America, In the latter place railway stations are worse than our fish markets for noise. The Chinese railway stations were clean before the trains came in and clean after they had gone.

They have only two classes—"The cushion seat" and "the wooden seat." For sleeping there are special cars. The mail trains have Restaurant cars which supply both Chinese and foreign food if ordered. There are no porters.

Did to vent , assessored

People's Condition

At Mukden, as elsewhere, pre-British and Japanese high class hotels are used as officers' rest houses and workers' dormitories. It is as though the Taj Mahal Hotel in Bombay or Spencer's Hotel or Connemara Hotel in Madras, were converted into dormitories for Congress volunteers. The only difference is that these buildings are maintained in a very good state. As we went up North the standard of cleanliness became lower, until at Mukden there were plenty of files and crows and the spitting habit was also evident. There were also mosquitoes.

The village children are well-dressed; if anything, they have too much clothing with cotton shoes made in their own homes. It is a pleasure to see such little ones.

These people are great meat eaters and they also eat a lot of vegetables. I fear their food is overcooked in

A Wood water lift near Shanghai

oil etc. We, vegeterians in our party, had to live mainly on boiled potatoes, baked bread, cauliflower and beans upto Peking. After that one of the Chinese officers joined us and ordered various Chinese vegetable dishes; so we also had mushrooms, asparagus, spinnach, soya-bean preparations, tomato and even curds and milk! Generally the Chinese use very little milk.

Cattle and other Animals

The animals are fat and rounded. The carts and carriages may be in a rickety condition; but the mules, horses and bullocks are fat and strong. Their pigs are stallfed. I asked a farmer, "Don't you let out these pigs to eat nightsoil?" His reply was, "How can we afford to give them such valuable stuff, which we convert into manure? In any case our pigs will not eat nightsoil as they are not accustomed to it." I asked our guide about this. He was an officer of cultural relations with foreign countries and was rather surprised to hear pigs did eat nightsoil anywhere I Ha said, "I have never seen or heard of pigs eating such stuff."

Irrigation

Considerable amount of irrigation work has been done in the last two years. In this region about 30 lakes of wells have been sunk, about 10 lakes of pumps set up and over 1 million acres have been irrigated.

Roads, Houses etc.

The countrysides have hardly any well built roads. The houses in the North are flat roofed as in the Punjab. In the villages, where land reform has been carried out, the standard of living of the people is steadily rising. Though they still live in single roomed houses they have beds with mosquito nets but no radios!

For the first time in China we were addressed as Sir" and "Master" at Astor Hotel at Tientsin. This is still a British Hotel, taken on three months' lease by the Chinese Government.

Medical Service and Industrial Wages

The Chinese are making excellent use of the uptodate hospitals left by the American Missioneries and of the well planned and erected factories left by the Japanese. In these factories there is not a wide difference between the expert worker, foremen and managers in regard to wages.

Character of the People

We reached Nanking on the 19th October. China has pulled itself up, not merely through the measures taken by the Government, but largely because of the character of the people. They do not generally believe in religion but are conscientious and honest. Everywhere from a fish market to a chain store, the prices are fixed. If our country is down and out, it is mainly due to lack of character from top to bottom. The orderliness and organizing power of the Chinese are marvellous. In India we may have better memories and brain power but we cannot match the Chinese in shrewdness and instinctive practical bent of mind.

The Governor of the People's Bank gave us a talk at Peking on the Economic Situation. It was not the statistics that impressed me but the personality of the man. He was no match to our 'Economists' academically. He was an old military man. He is advised by technical experts but the practical measures adopted are his own. In six months they turned the country from inflation to stability. Even now, of course, the prices run into astronomical figures. That is

nothing. It is just as though, in our country, we calculated every thing in terms of pies. The unit is small. This can be set right any time. A quarter of an anna is equal to 100 yens. Business does not suffer from uncertainty. As has been stated, food is plenty and so is cloth. Everywhere you meet smiling faces. This is the true test of good Government and prosperity.

A Lurking Danger

I have a fear that after this transitional period, things may change if they do not look sharp. Already the indices show a very small drop in food crop and a large increase in cotton, tobacco and hemp. This is a trend we know too well as "industrialization", and we also know where it will lead. I do hope that with their genius for putting things right, the Chinese will tackle this rising symptom early enough to control it.

At present they claim that the purchasing power of the peasants in the N. E. Province has gone up by 60% and that of the general population by 53%. I do not doubt it, as there seems to be a general feeling of prosperity.

So far they have not spent their money on roads. They have concentrated on agricultural production and that by improving their old methods. I did not see any signs of mechanised farming. It is all done by donkeys, mules and bullocks. Small horses are also used. Their animals are well fed and looked after. Man and beast have enough to eat and to waste, but the latter is against their nature. The Chinese seem to have a peculiar genius to convert all waste into wealth.

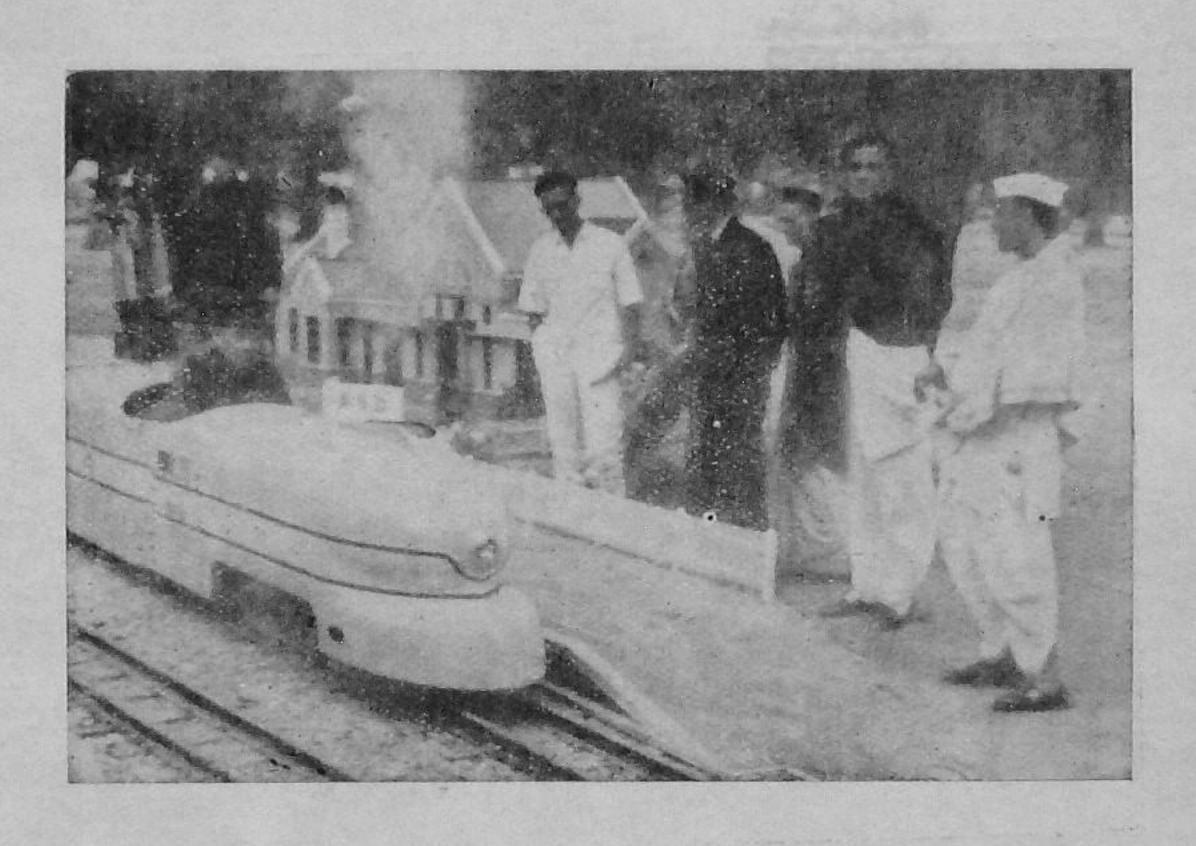
At Mukden, in the Steel Co's, the Managers' allowance is about three times the minimum wage, which latter is calculated to support two persons. Some good labourers get nearly double that of the Manager. Can we say this of Tata's or Birla's?

Their old race courses are converted into permanent industrial exhibitions to educate the masses. The hutments are of bamboo thatties. No admission is charged. Workers from factories are sent to these exhibitions on full day wages. School children are taken by the teachers. The children take notes of what the guides say, and the latter answer the children's questions most attentively.

The huge stores were packed to overflowing with consumer goods. There were no signs of strangled business under Government control,

Shanghai

From Nanking we went to Shanghai. It is a huge city with sky-scrapers and imposing buildings. The streets looked strange without cars. On either side of the road were three lines of cycle-rickshaws, which they call Pedecabs. There were a few motor lorries carrying goods. The approach to the city, as usual everywhere in the world, was through slums and dirt. There was plenty of food as everywhere else. The air was foggy like Calcutta. They had some American type of buildings about twenty storeys high. We were in a hotel about fifteen storeys high. Only in Shanghai we could get any newspapers, which even criticised the Government. But as a rule, the largest circulation is of Government controlled papers. People were so patriotic that even if they had



At the F.xhilition—Feking

A Working Midel of a Railway Train



A Pleasure Garden at Hanchow

short-wave radios, they did not turn them on and listen into foreign broadcast. This kept us in the dark about affairs in India.

Justice

We visited a People's Court, where cases were tried with quick despatch. In these courts there are no lawyers. The present being a transitory period, even the ijudges were only men of six months' to a year's training. All the old laws had been set aside and only common sense prevailed There was a Judge, an Assistant Judge, and a man and a woman acting as Assessors. This formed the Court. The Judge examined witnesses directly and the Government provided a defender to the accused in complicated cases to help the Court. Representatives of the public were allowed to be present and to express their opinions.

In the case we saw, an ill-treated wife had committed suicide. The mother-in-law got fifteen years, the brother-in-law ten years and the father-in-law two years on probation. While some representatives of the public said that the judgement and punishment were good, one woman got up and said that in her opinion the sentences were lenient; as the suicide was the direct result of cruelty by others it was almost like murder. She thought the mother-in-law should have been awarded the capital sentence! Such is Chinese Democracy today.

These and other reforms and works of national reconstruction were carried out in the amazingly short period of about two years. It is all the more wonderful when we remember the state China was in before "liberation". It was a highly exploited nation, on the verge of starvation, oppressed by wars—internal and external.

The Chinese are a loveable people. The toddlers on the streets, the moment they recognise you as a foreigner, get hold of their mothers' pyjamas and greet you with a sweet smile; and little older ones clap their hands in joy. At Canton, little boys had been lined up at the Station to say farewell to us with flowers. As one little fellow handed me a bunch of flowers, I bent down to pat him on his cheeks. Immediately he put his arms round my neck and clung on to me. This was a signal for all the other little ones to do the same and they all started climbing over me until Pandit Sunderlal shouted, "Be careful. He is a blood-pressure patient; you will kill him with your affection." Then some of the senior volunteers came to my rescue. Such was the unbounded affection of young China.

Pre requisites of Leadership

National life is led in the main by three guiding principles. According to the basis chosen National expression differs in its aspect, and qualifies, ultimately, any nation for leadership.

The principles may be classified as (1) Material, (2) Social and (3) Moral or Spiritual according to the final deciding factor. Naturally no single principle will govern alone. It is always a mixture of several. One has to weigh all factors and see which will tell in the end. Generally we may evaluate the standard of achievement of a nation with reference to its altruistic motives. The more primitive the people, the less can they think of conditions beyond their own life. The more evolved the people, the better can they appreciate the effect of their actions on others.

By a cultural process these principles are developed finally into national ways of life. Sometimes these ways of

national life assume the form of maintaining a standard of material life, sometimes it is expressed in the form of formal or organized religious or social order. Both these are controlled by the evolution of external discipline or authoritarian rule. Sometimes the evolution can only be attained by the exercise of an internal discipline practised by the individual as distinct from the group.

Under the old Roman Empire an attempt was made, on a universal level, to mould together the authoritarian rule of the Pope with a social order based on feudal discipline and combine this with moral and religious principles laid down in the Catholic religion. This three-sided control failed, because of the incompatibility of the various components. There had to be an over-ruling principle.

A similar attempt was made on a national level by the British Empire, which took in only the white races on the social basis and evolved a group discipline founded on military power. This worked within certain limits, but failed ultimately, because the material standard placed it on an unstable equilibrium politically and socially.

Under the plea of moral and spiritual guidance, the Muslims tried to raise ethnical standards to unify people into a common behaviour pattern so as to solidify them into a single powerful group. This also broke down, as sufficient power could not be generated by this enforced external discipline.

Leaving aside the moral and religious basis of the old Roman Empire, the over-whelming material considerations of the U. K. and the U. S. A. and the ethnical standards of the Muslims, Soviet Russia made an attempt to unify

people under its leadership purely on a social and economic basis. They started on the proletariat level, so their starting point was not basic enough, and the omission of moral and spiritual values undermined their strength.

The Americans reduced the ethnical factor and, to a large extent, lowered the moral basis, giving a fairly free play to the material aspect of life. They have succeeded on the material side, but have miserably failed to control their lives above the animal standard. The moment their material life was seen to be in danger, they let loose the Atom Bomb, thus giving priority to material considerations over human or moral values.

China has struck out a new line for herself. While she has benefited by the experience of others, she is solving her problems in her own way. She has drawn on Soviet experience but has not slavishly imitated her. Leaving the proletariat she has gone to the bed-rock of the nation and has started organizing her peasants. Leaving academic theories of private ownership and profits and equality of incomes, she is nationally organizing her productive units in the best suited way. But, unfortunately, even she is in danger of throwing overboard the ancient culture she has depended upon all these ages to steady her. Permanent moral values are yielding place to expediencies. This is a danger that, we all hope. China will soon awake to and rectify betimes. We can look to China for leade ship, only if she brings her moral and spiritual forces to bear on her national undertakings and gives them a leading role.

Thus, in summary the Old Roman Empire and Britain tried to combine all values and get the best of both worlds and came short of both. The Muslims and the

Soviet attempted to place the social order first with little or no success. The U.S. A., with their Japanese admirers close on their heels, hoped to attain their goal by jettisoning moral and other higher values and we know with what dire results. China has started at the right end by emphasising human needs and values but it looks dangerously as though moral and spiritual considerations may not be given the priority they deserve. If that be the case, China too may go the way of all the others.

For the discipline that is essential to material life, the Old Roman Empire, the British, the U. S. A. and the Japanese, all the four groups, looked to military discipline enforced from without by external authority. In Soviet Russia, among the Muslims, and in China, they have sought to develop the needed moral in an ideology. This noes not appear strong enough to hold together a heterogenous group composed of units of vast sections of the human race.

No nation has as yet laid down moral values as its ultimate criterion. In India, Mahatma Gandhi taught us to evaluate everything, not from a material point of view, nor from merely social well-being, but from the point of view of eternal truth and the establishment of non-violence among fellow beings. When such principles are embodied in our everyday life, and we evolve a culture that will control our actions from within, then alone shall we be qualified for leadership in a world which is organized today for self-destruction.

To do this, each nation should organize itself on a self-sufficiency basis in its primary needs for food, clothing and other inevitables, decentralize its activities to this end,

and control itself by a discipline, generated from within, through a well regulated life, calculated to fit into a social order characterised by conflicting interests.

There can be no leadership without self-discipline generated from a philosophy and way of life that takes into consideration all the factors that have a bearing. This is only possible when we reach down to basic principles of life and living. May we hope that the warring nations of the world will realise this and not seek their solution in competitively more destructive weapons? What shall it profit a nation if it gains the whole world and loses its own soul? Who shall be the leader but the one who serves?

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