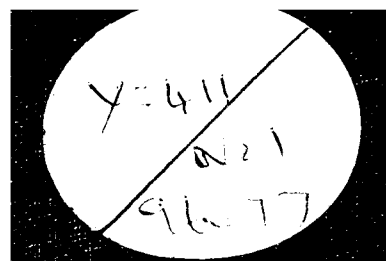


A War Indictment
Against Alcohol



A WAR INDICTMENT AGAINST ALCOHOL

*being a British Confession during the War
about Alcoholic drinks*



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FOREWORD

During the War when the British people faced a great crisis, they realised the need for many a national cleansing process, and their best people made earnest appeals for reforms.

India is now in a fiery crucible. She is at the re-birth of freedom. We are facing a crisis no less than the one that Europe passed through during the War. We have to go through a cleansing process, even as Europe did at that time. Masters of our own house we shall soon be engaged in a great War against Ignorance, Superstition, Poverty, Crime and Corruption. Drink is one of the deadliest enemies to be fought at the very outset.

Mr. Arthur Mee and Dr. J. Stuart Holden wrote a book "Defeat or Victory" in the course of which the following stirring appeal to give up the use of Alcoholic drinks was made. The appeal was for immediate and total prohibition of the liquor trade as long as the War lasted. What is good for Britain during the great War is good for us now and for all time.

C. RAJAGOPALACHAR.

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 * செப்பனிரு முடித்த நாள் 22-6-94 *
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A War Indictment

The Great Waste

"During the past fifty years drink has deprived this country of man-power equivalent to the whole British army under arms. We are drinking away our strength. For every acre that we give to growing wheat for food, drink takes an acre for destroying food. The land wasted on drink in this country would make a field a mile wide from England to America; and this on an island which grows only one loaf of every six it eats.

"The labour that drink has stolen from this country during the war is equivalent to the whole United Kingdom standing idle for a hundred days. Mr. Lloyd George said in 1915, that by stopping drink we could add a vast army of men to our armament works without spending one penny on additional structure, without putting down a single additional machine, and all by one act of sacrifice on the part of the nation. The King has said, 'It is, without doubt, largely due to drink that we are unable to secure the output of war material indispensable to meet the requirements of our army.'

"Drink and its results cost us one million pounds a day. During the war the national drink bill has reached four hundred million pounds. We must have poured more of our financial strength into this trade since August, 1914, than we have fired away in

France. We are giving an enemy trade the power to waste our wealth, scatter our resources, drain our people's savings, and break down our reserves. We let the drink trade use hundreds of millions of cubic feet of space in ships, congest our docks, streets, and railways, use up the labour of hundreds of thousands of men. We have not men enough to carry on the war, but we have men enough to lift and move from place to place a weight of drink stuff every year three times as heavy as the Great Pyramid. It took a hundred thousand men a generation to set up the Great Pyramid, but if we had pulled it down and set it up again three times since war began, it would have taken less labour than the shifting of this drink stuff that ships pour everlastingly into our docks. Every week our railways carry enough of it to fill over hundred thousand trains of two hundred tons each.

"We shall not win the war until we have built a trench between the British home and the public house.

The Call

"The Prime Minister has declared that this trade has sown destruction and devastation in time of peace, and in war has done us more damage than all the German submarines.

"The King has banished alcohol from his palaces as a traitor to the state.

"General Joffre has declared it the duty

of all patriots to fight alcohol in all its forms; by diminishing the moral and material strength of the army it is a crime against national defence in the face of the enemy.

"Lord Kitchener would have nothing to do with drink during the war, and begged his men to keep fit by leaving it alone.

"Lord Roberts, in almost his last message to the nation, declared that drink was prejudicial to our chance of victory.

"Lord Curzon declared that drink is a leprous spot eating into the life of our people.

"Lord Rosebery warned us long ago of the time that is now come, when, if the state did not control the liquor traffic, the liquor traffic would control the state.

"Mr. Chamberlain, the first of our imperial statesmen, declared that while a priest-ridden nation is to be pitied, a publican-ridden nation is to be despised.

"Mr. Bonar Law will not touch alcohol, and is believed to be in favour of prohibition during the war.

"Admiral Jellicoe declares that alcohol is the enemy of efficiency and reduces the efficiency of shooting by one third.

"Lord Wolseley declared that drink kills more soldiers than all the new weapons of warfare.

"The Czar of Russia has indicted alcohol as the exploiter of the ruin of his people.

"Admiral Beatty has appealed to the

nation to arouse itself from its languor, and it can hardly be possible that the drink trade was not in his mind when he said: 'The nation is not yet roused out of its state of self-satisfaction. When our people have humility and prayer in their hearts we can count the days to the end.' Nor can it have been out of Sir William Robertson's mind when, on being asked what the church could do to help to win, he said, 'Bishop, make the nation more religious.'

Britain's Brain Indicts Alcohol

'No less than 2,448 of Britain's greatest citizens have signed the following statement:

'Drink hinders the army; it is the cause of grave delay with munitions; it keeps thousands of men from war work every day, and makes good, sober workmen second-rate.

'It hampers the navy; it delays transports, places them at the mercy of submarines, slows repairs, and congests docks.

'It threatens our mercantile marine; it has absorbed during the war over two hundred million cubic feet of space, and it retards the building of ships to replace our losses.

'It destroys our food supplies; during the war it has consumed over three million five hundred thousand tons of food, with sugar enough to last the nation one hundred days. It uses up more sugar than the army.

'It wastes our financial strength; since

the war began our people have spent on alcohol over four hundred million pounds.

'It diverts the nation's strength; it uses five hundred thousand workers, one million acres of land, and one million five hundred thousand tons of coal a year; and during the war, it has involved the lifting and handling on road and rail of a weight equal to fifty million tons.

'It shatters our moral strength; its temptations to women involve grave danger to children and anxiety to thousands of soldiers.'

A Wonderful Company

"The names of the men and women who signed this document directed to the British government are known among informed people the world over.

"There are men who have been ambassadors, commanded squadrons, built ships, made guns, written books, painted pictures, carved monuments, educated children, made the British name illustrious by their discoveries and investigations, administered justice, built industries, maintained national health, presided over public bodies, shaped laws, and advised the King in privy counsel.

"One of them saved the British army in its retreat from Mons; nine of them wear the V. C. There are nearly one hundred admirals and generals and one hundred fifty other army officers. Many of them represent the Red Cross or the military hospitals; hundreds

are controllers of munitions of war, scientific directors of the science of munitions, or heads of the ministry of munitions training-schools. A hundred of them represent Parliament, the Privy Council, and the Imperial Services. A hundred more stand for literature, art, music, and the stage, and hundreds represent the great trades and industries and finance. There are two hundred baronets and knights, and hundreds of men distinguished in municipal life, including a hundred who are or have been mayors, sheriffs, deputy-lieutenants of counties, and county council chairmen. There are representatives of every university in the United Kingdom, and the principals of hundreds of university colleges and public schools. There are sixty or seventy Fellows of the Royal Society, and twenty five members or associates of the Royal Academy. There are five hundred magistrates and about the same number of doctors, including medical officers of health for nearly one third of the United Kingdom.

Laurel-Crowned Men

"But even such a summary as this can hardly give a proper conception of the dignity of this list of names. It stands for the intellectual and industrial strength of Britain. At the head of its military group stands a general on active service who wears the Victoria Cross, another wears the D.S.O., another whose name has rung through Europe in this war. At the head of its munitions group is the present controller of

shipping with the chairman of the Cunard Line, all the great ship-builders, and such a man as the late Sir Hiram Maxim. At the head of the imperial group stands Viscount Bryce, our late ambassador in the great republic of the West, with Sir Ernest Satow, our late ambassador to our gallant ally in the East. The Order of Merit which Viscount Bryce represents is found at the head of other groups as well; as the Victoria Cross heads the list of soldiers, so the order of merit heads the list of public servants of authors, and of scientists. At the head of the Literature group stands Thomas Hardy, with the Poet Laureate beside him; at the head of the group of science men stands Sir Williams Crookes, with such names following as Sir E. Ray Lankester, Sir Norman Lockyer and Sir Ernest Rutherford.

"For Education we have Dr. Michael Sadler, with the Master of Balliol, the Provost of Oriel, and hundreds of names familiar in learning; and when we come to Medicine and the Public Health, we find Sir Rickman Godlee, president of the Royal College of Surgeons, with such men as Sir William Osler and Sir Edward Shafer, and most of our great physiologists and surgeons. There are men here, like Patrick Manson and Sir Ronald Ross, whose work has saved millions of lives throughout the world.

And Women Also

"And there are not men only, there are women and organisations too. There is a

daughter of Lord Lansdowne and a daughter of Mr. Gladstone; a sister of Lord Kitchener and a sister of Lord French; there is the wife of the late President of the Board of Trade and the wife of the present Prime Minister (a curious thing is that, waiting for Mr. Lloyd George as he came home on his first day as premier was this appeal from his wife, in company with thousands of the most distinguished people in the nation, pleading that Britain might be put at full strength.) There are all the great leaders of the great Y.M.C.A., the heads of the Salvation Army and the Church Army, and men and women who stand for social work in our great towns. And there are men and women who stand for the will of the masses of the people—such names we find as Mrs. Snowden, Mrs. Sidney Webb, Mr. George Lansbury, Mr. Thomas Burt, M.P., Mrs. Richards, M.P., the Secretary of the Miners' Federation; such miners' M.Ps. as Mr. J. G. Hancock, Mr. Finney and Mr. Galbraith. Though the Memorial stands chiefly outside Parliament, the M.Ps. on this list represent about five millions of the population, and several of them are members of the government.

"No charge of narrow fanaticism can be brought against a document like this. It speaks for the brain-power of the British people and it asks for immediate and total prohibition of the liquor trade as long as the war lasts."