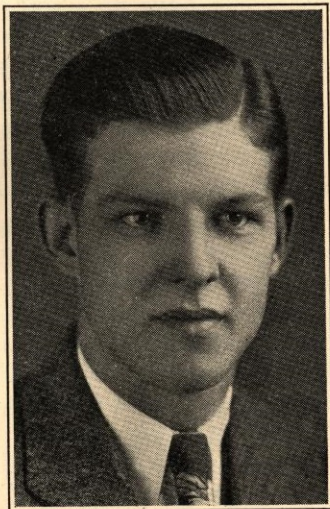


DATE KERNELS

By HAROLD LEVANDER*, Gustavus Adolphus College

We moderns little realize we are living in a world that has undergone a tremendous change. For the ancients time and space were such effective barriers that one people knew of activities of another about as accurately as we know of events on Mars. So little had our ancestors in common with their neighbors that strangers were regarded as enemies, and one word designated both. Even the discovery of America was not generally known in Europe until ten long years after the event occurred.

As late as 1775 Benjamin Franklin spent forty-two days crossing the Atlantic. A few years later George Washington rode two whole weeks on horseback from Mount Vernon to New York for his inauguration. Even as recently as the War of 1812 the bloodiest battle was fought two weeks after the treaty of peace had been signed. Truly the ancient world was in Macbeth's vivid phrase, "cabined, cribbed, confined."



HAROLD LeVANDER
Winner Third Place

Then a short century ago dawned the age of science. And since then with lightning rapidity these barriers of time and space have been battered down until today we are confronted with a transformed world. Now the many isolated worlds of yesterday have been fused into one great community. Today we can eat breakfast in New York and speeding across the continent can have supper in Los Angeles. An airman in the Schneider Cup races recently flew 330 miles per hour, and now Capt. Hawks tells us that in ten years we will be flying 500 miles per hour. Think of it, friends—from Northfield to Chicago

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in forty-five minutes! Pope Pius, speaking in Italy, is heard in America one-tenth of a second after the words have fallen from his lips. American newspapers carry headlines of a revolt in Peru one hour after the first bomb has exploded. Science has brought forth the steamship, the ocean cable, the motor car, the telephone, the airplane, the radio, all of which are binding the nations together with bonds magnetic.

But science has not been the only factor in riveting the nations together. Trade routes, each a strand in a well-ordered pattern, cover the world as a giant cob-web. Trade has made us so dependent upon other nations that a catastrophe in Brazil and we would have no coffee for breakfast, a hurricane in Cuba and we would have no sugar, a famine in China and we would have no cups, a strike in Ireland and we would have no linen table cloths, a revolution in Mexico and we would have no silver spoons. Yes, a cessation of trade would deprive us of our American breakfast. Our annual foreign commerce exceeds nine billion dollars while the foreign trade of the world has climbed to the staggering sum of 100 billion dollars.

Nor is that all. Finance following in the wake of commerce has added yet another bond of unity. Last year witnessed the creation of a world bank. United States is tied to other commonwealths by loans totalling 30 billion dollars. Today a depression in China causes a slump in the stock market in New York. An interruption of trade with India shakes the very foundation of English financial stability. The magnetic bonds of science, the invisible sinews of trade, the far-flung penetrations of finance—these impel us to exclaim in the words of Pope, "We are but parts of one stupendous whole."

In those early days when the nations dwelt apart as self-sufficient units, then a nation's safety was an individual national problem. Then a nation could wage war without affecting its neutral neighbors. But in the light of changed conditions this has become impossible. Such a thing as separate and distinct safety for any individual nation apart from the safety of the whole has become a medieval myth. Let me illustrate. In 1914 an ill-fated bullet was fired at Archduke Ferdinand in Serajevo. The result? Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia. Then with startling rapidity Germany, France, Russia, Great Britain, Belgium, Montenegro, Japan, and Turkey threw themselves into the fray. And as the war progressed, other and yet other nations were sucked into the mad vortex until at the end of those four insane years, thirty-seven nations from five different conti-

nents had been drawn directly into the fury of battle, and every little outpost of civilization had experienced the tremors of that cataclysm. The modern historian Garrett says, "The World War shows us that today a war between two industrial nations will engulf the whole of civilization and make a fiction of neutrality." Indeed, friends, the world is one great body, and a canker on any portion infects the whole organism.

But, sad to say, this internationalization has not penetrated every field. In spite of the fact that the status of nations has been radically altered, our minds are still plodding along meeting new problems with outworn policies. Our thinking has not kept pace with the march of progress. In the words of Ramsay MacDonald, "The drawing room of our mind is still equipped with the antique furniture of a century ago." Henrik Van Loon uses another figure to illustrate the antiquity of our mental process. He says, "The human mind is slower than the proverbial turtle, lazier than the well-known sloth and marches three or four hundred years behind scientific achievement."

Two hundred years ago, in a world of isolated units, our forefathers thought, and rightly so, that all each nation must do to be safe from attack was to build up a formidable fighting machine. Today in a world of interdependent units—in a world in which no nation is safe unless all are safe—we continue to think that a huge fighting machine guarantees national safety. And that fighting machine spells safety to a nation in the measure that it is stronger than the fighting equipment of its neighbors; inevitably safety has become a matter of feverish competition. Thus it is just this obsolete thinking that has today driven us into an armament race that unchecked will plunge us from the plateau of civilization into the abyss of savagery.

Listen to this: thirty-three million men, eleven million more than before the World War, armed to the teeth stand at attention ready at the command "March!" to leap at each others' throats. If you were to sit here from dawn till dark and watch that army march by in single file, you would have to sit here not a month nor a year, but for five whole years! In lock-step with the growth of the armies is the growth of military budgets. In the last five years the world's armament bill has doubled, and each succeeding year with relentless regularity the figure mounts higher, ever higher. What though the national debt of Italy is greater than her national wealth? Mussolini cares not; seventy cents out of every Italian tax dollar goes to build a huge and efficient killing machine. What though the poor of Paris feed up-

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on the garbage of the alleys? "Let them die!" cries France. The government bleeds the peasantry to support the largest army in the world. What though the breadlines of America are longer this winter than ever before? America must spend one billion dollars on armaments and rush to completion the program for fifteen new cruisers. In the blunt words of Prof. Fisher of Yale, "It is a race to international bankruptcy." Yes, on—on goes the race!

Witness the frenzy of the nations as they vie for military security!

Behold France as she builds new fortifications on her frontiers, plans fifty new warships, increases her aerial forces, negotiates alliances, and delves deep under the Seine River to hide her gold reserve.

Observe Great Britain as she launches an ever increasing legion of floating monsters and matches airplane for airplane with France.

Note the conduct of Japan. Conscious of the immense cruisers of Great Britain and America, she reciprocates with myriads of small craft.

Mark the activities of Russia as she inaugurates a plan to have by 1933 a trained army of seventeen million men.

Witness the ominous sabre-rattling of Italy. At the age of 11 her youth is trained to use the rifle, at 15 to handle the bayonet, at 17 to operate the machine-gun. In five years Italy will have an efficient standing army of one million men. In addition, Mussolini has plans for the construction of seventy-three warships. Only two months ago a mob of one hundred thousand people gathered in the square of Milan, shouted "Down with France!" willing again to be the cannon feeder of a new war.

Yes, friends, our selfish, national thinking is busily preparing the world stage for another dreadful drama of death. And we all know the strides made by modern science since the carnage of 1918. Guns and cannon have been perfected which will throw giant shells 78 miles with deadly accuracy. A one-armed cripple in France by throwing an electric switch can release shells that hurtle across the Channel will annihilate the whole city of Portsmouth. Trenches, impractical under such a barrage, will be replaced by huge armored transports maneuvering whole regiments. The modern tank speeding 104 miles an hour, equipped with cannon and machine gun, is forty times as destructive as the best World War type. Perfected shells, improved tanks—but not only that. Since the World War we've invented seventeen

new kinds of poison gas, some so deadly that one unit of gas in three million units of air will blot out all life. And just the other day in South Africa a man discovered a new gas so poisonous that one drop will kill 10,000 people. No glamor in the next war. Invisible clouds of death spread by airplane hundreds of miles behind the lines. Millions of old men, helpless women, innocent babes—gas victims; nerves aflame, lungs rotted, coughing and choking, spitting blood and pus.

But even gas is not the final word in scientific butchery. Ticks, cooties, fleas, and body lice infected with virulent bubonic plague and typhoid fever sowed wholesale through enemy territory by aircraft will transform a healthy populace into a pestilence-stricken multitude.

Such is the calamity to which our outworn concept of security is inevitably sweeping us. Ladies and gentlemen, mark these words: with a continuation of our present method and policy the day shall come—yes, must come—in the not distant future, when the war drums shall rumble again, and we, the common people, shall cry out unto the mountains, "Cover us!" and to the caverns of the deep, "Swallow us!"

What can we do to avert the disaster? World conditions have changed; our mental attitudes have remained static. It seems the issue is clear. We must square thinking with reality. And that is a two-fold task.

In the fertile thought-field of the minds of men and women of our generation grow rampant noxious weeds—the quack grass of selfish nationalism, the thistles of jealousy and hate. We are called to the task of weed-pulling. And weed-pulling though a back-breaking task is not a hopeless one.

The second part of our task is even more inviting. The generations follow one another in bewildering succession. Already another generation is in the offing about to cross the threshold. And the mind-life of this growing generation presents to our view virgin acres.

Here we are called to the task of sowing, not the outworn concepts of national safety, tares that ripen swiftly into war, but the seeds of the sturdy, slow-ripening tree of peace and international understanding.

A king of France was one day passing through Catalonia when he met an old man diligently planting date kernels.

"Why dost thou plant seeds of so tardy a growth?" he asked, "seeing they will not ripen until a hundred years be past?"

the fruit of trees planted by my forefathers who thought of those to come, and shall I not do likewise for those yet to be?"

Friends, I invite you to share in the two-fold task. Let us be weed-pullers, and above all let us be sowers of date kernels. Then with the passing of the years those to come after us having squared their thinking with world conditions as they are and living in peace and equity with their neighbors may look back to us and say, "Blessed be those who planted the date trees, the golden fruit of which we are today partaking."