

TRIBUNE

CRISIS AHEAD Bleak Future

The Prime Minister and the Members of the MEP Cabinet seem to be totally oblivious to the fact that an economic crisis of tremendous magnitude has loomed large on our horizon. Whilst the Premier seems to be concentrating on holding on to power by subtly playing one group against another, his colleagues seem to be too far buried in "admit-bearer" chits and "transfer-bearer" chits to be in the least concerned about our deteriorating balance of trade and our vanishing foreign assets.

With Machiavellian astuteness, worthy of the Big Fish of UNP vintage, S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike seems to think that the way to be Prime Minister is to divide and rule the country. The Buddhist Sangha is today rent in two. The Buddhist Congress makes impossible demands, but Malwate and Asgiriya will have no truck with these "extremists". By encouraging both groups at times, and at times provoking them against each other, the Prime Minister and his worthy Minister of Cultural Affairs Jayaweera Kuruppu have now created a situation where the Government can shelve doing anything concrete in regard to the Buddhist Congress and EBP demands in regard to Buddhist revivalism.

Language

Whilst the Premier has been able to sidetrack the religious fanatics,

he has not been able to curb the language fanatics. At a recent meeting of the EBP, a leading Bhikkhu made what is believed to be an inspired suggestion that some concessions should be made to the minorities in the form of some suitable amendments to the Official Language Act. This suggestion was received with a storm of violent protest, and the Premier, in a restrained and calculated statement, indicated that he had no intentions of making any concessions to the minorities. Malwate and Asgiriya, whilst hinting that it was unfortunate that Tamils should fly black flags on Independence Day, did not offer any suggestion as to how the present impasse might be broken.

There is no denying the fact that in the Northern and Eastern regions, and also in the up-country plantation areas, there has grown up a deep sense of frustration and bitterness owing to the chauvinistic language policies of this government. What makes it even worse is that in regard to the citizenship inquiries, the administration of the Indian and Pakistani Residents (Citizenship) Act has taken a more rigorous and unjust turn now than in the days of the UNP regime.

The Prime Minister and the Cabinet do not seem to be in the least conscious of the storm that is brewing among the Tamil minority in this island. The campaign against the provocative "Sinhalese Only" SRI numberplate can very

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well trigger a very dangerous and unhappy situation. And it is known in knowledgeable circles that any "strong-arm" tactics to suppress demonstrations in the North and the East are likely to have intense repercussions in the plantation areas in the up-country. Unconscious and unconcerned about the state of public feeling among the minorities, the Cabinet and the MEP are sitting on top of a volcano that is on the verge of erupting. It must be recognised that over eighty percent of the wealth of the country is produced by the sweat and the toil of the Tamil minority.

Economic

With this crisis brewing, owing to the language die-hardism of the MEP, the economic crisis, which is almost upon the country, is likely to burst - according to competent observers - in March or April of this year. Unless the adverse trade balance is reversed and unless the foreign assets position improves, this Government will face a financial crisis of the first magnitude. It is possible that the Treasury will be tempted to print a large quantity of currency notes (in *Sinhalese Only* probably) to render some artificial respiration to the disintegrating financial position. But even the merest tryo in economics will know that inflation of this kind cannot solve any crisis. It will only deepen and accentuate it.

It seems inconceivable that a Government should rush headlong to its destruction where there is a simple way out of the crisis. Through a tolerant and democratic language policy, the Government will easily be able to achieve national unity - which is an essential factor, necessary to implement

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CEYLON NEWS REVIEW
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WEEK by WEEK in CEYLON

★ PHILIP GUNewardENA

★ KARIAPPER ★ GMOA

The Minister of Food and Agriculture, Mr. Philip Gunewardena has made a rousing speech at Gal-Oya, a rabble rousing speech.

At a reception accorded to him and other Ministers and M.P.'s by the Gal Oya Development Board Workers' Union he said: The Gal Oya scheme, a multi-purpose project initiated by the U.N.P. government, is an excellent one although the present government does not condone the actions of certain officials of the Gal Oya Development Board, who exercise autocratic powers. If they are unable to attune themselves to changed conditions, it is in their interests to pack up and go away".

Mr. Gunewardena is an adept at rabble rousing as we all know. And he made this speech although there was no provocation for it. There have been no complaints that the administration of the Gal Oya Board is faulty, except of course that the Chairman of the Board is Mr. K. Kanagasunderam. And that is a deadly sin as far as Mr. Gunewardena is concerned, for Mr. Kanagasunderam and those of his ilk, we all know, are *persona non grata* with Mr. Gunewardena.

So Mr. Kanagasunderam must be removed and in his place we must have a person with a Sinhala s s unding name. Or even with a Muslim so nning name.

Kariapper

Gate Mudaliyar M. S. Kariapper, a brand new recruit to the M.E.P., also spoke at the reception. He said: "I was the first to demand a Commission of Inquiry after the Gal Oya disturbances and I am glad to see that the Commission is not entirely scrapped, but would be replaced by another which would enquire into the working of the Board. Much could not be expected of the Board when its chief administrators were 200 miles away".

Gate Mudaliyar Kariapper was referring in his speech to the decision of the Government not to scrap entirely the Commission of

Inquiry that was appointed to go into the reasons for the communal disturbances at Gal Oya, but to allow it to examine the working of the Gal Oya Board and recommend changes wherever necessary.

The *Tribune* in a comment on the appointment of the Gal Oya, Commission of Inquiry, some time ago, said: "It could be understood if the government appointed a Commission to probe into civil disturbance in the country as a whole, but this invidious distinction smacks of a conspiracy against certain members of the Board. The whole country knows whether the incidents which occurred in the Eastern province were due to the 'faulty administration of the Gal Oya Development Board or not' without a Commission having to tell us that. And the terms of reference of the Commission let the cat out of the bag; especially that part which states 'if need be the changes in the administration of the Gal Oya Board area?'"

Elsewhere in the comment again it was stated: Is the appointment of the Commission really to probe

the communal incidents or merely a convenient peg to hang the case for the dismissal of certain unwanted members of the Gal Oya Development Board?"

Now we know that just as the *Tribune* had anticipated, the Commission was really intended to inquire into and recommend the dismissal of certain members of the Gal Oya Board.

And Mr. Philip Gunewardena may receive a pat on his back and the goodwill of the fanatics in his party and Gate Mudaliyar Kariapper too will probably be equally rewarded.

Rumour

It was rumoured when Gate Mudaliyar somersaulted from the Federal Party into the M.E.P. that a reward was awaiting him. But no one should give credence to rumours. However we give the rumour for what it is worth. Gate Mudaliyar Kariapper, it was rumoured only was promised the Chairmanship of the Gal Oya Development Board if

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2nd WEEK

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DAHANAYAKE

"I do not love thee Banda dear
The reason why is very clear
I do not love thee Banda dear
Because you change from
year to year."

It is useful to recall to mind this parody because it is "interesting", if not amusing, to note how aptly it describes the author himself and how, not a few years later, he compromised to serve under its subject as Minister of Education. Mr. Dahanayake's political career has been a varied one. From being a school-master in a Roman Catholic school, he turned to politics to contest a by-election and win the Bible Seat in the State Council. Thereafter at the general election to Parliament he contested the Galle seat as an Independent and beat the Galle Stalwart by a convincing majority. That was perhaps the first time voters got used to the idea of voting for the man of their choice irrespective of whose vehicles they went in to the booth.

Having thus securely bound himself to this seat, he was found to be flirting with the left parties when one fine day we casually came to know that "Daha" was in the L.S.S.P. Stealthily he was trying to climb the Sama Samaja ladder with his right foot groping for a rung in the U.N.P. ladder. Unfortunately, he was in the wrong place for the fulfilment of his ambition. The top was full of the best. However, this party expelled him and he remained an Independent.

Uneasy

Just before the last elections, he was seeking to redeem his ebbing political fortune. The language issue cropped up. And that was to him like a life-line thrown across a crevasse. He snatched it and won the seat on the ticket of the Bhasa Peramuna which was one of the mushroom parties and whose disappearance was as swift as its rise. Dahanayake was soon to change colours again. After the elections, he rid himself of the Bhasa coil and joined the S.L.F.P.

to instal himself rather insecurely in an uneasy alliance.

His frequent change of fronts was not without significance. He perhaps feels that at the rate he is going he may soon be a political outcast and leper. Politics has all the fascination of a *chic femme fatale* who embraces you one day only to drop you unceremoniously the next. The grim prospect of losing the support of the progressive forces were and are written for him on the wall. Dahanayake who but yesterday was making common cause with these forces has now deserted them. Like a drowning man clutching at a straw he woos the Muslims who, he thinks, will assure him of en bloc support in Galle. His hopes cannot be for long.

His present acts are irreconcilable with his record of criticism in

We publish this week a pungent profile of the Personality of the MEP Year. The writer has packed a great deal of bitter polemical irony, sarcasm and criticism into this sketch, but his outline of the political record of the Minister of Education will interest readers.

the Opposition. He who once characterised Mr. Bandaranaike as a diehard communalist has himself today become the champion of communal and sectarian causes. He who once described the U.N.P. Ministers with ignominious epithets is now doing those very things he scathingly attacked in the squalid language of the fish market. He who once condemned individual Ministers for interfering in administrative acts is himself today exposed as being guilty of such offences. Transfers of teachers and admission of patients to hospitals are as much his concern as they were

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1957

*What's New
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WE ARE looking for new readers, and if that's not exactly new, it's still mighty important to us and to you. Right now we're conducting a campaign for 2,500 subs, new readers and old readers whose subs have lapsed. And because we have only a small circulation department and no money for promotion we are asking you to get them for us. That's not new either, but it's one of the things that makes us what we are. What's new with us is what's new with the world.

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DAHANAYAKE

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of U.N.P. Ministers. What happened to these men and what happened to the father of free education, he knows, could happen to him. For this reason, he violates regulations in the most bare-faced manner. What he and his supporters did on the eve of the last Municipal election at Galle in a desperate attempt to retain the Ward for himself is now an open secret. He has broken conventions so sacred to our democratic institutions in his selfish desire to have a seat in the Council. His enthusiasm for Municipal politics waned, except to keep his seat, after people had uncharitably associated him with a well known criminal trial.

Communal

His present acts against the minorities are irreconcilable with his one-time professions of interest in the fostering of communal accord. He has not counted the cost before opening the flood-gates of communal discord. His threats of absorption and extinction will only boomerang on the very cause he is now espousing. To encourage communal disharmony does nobody any good. Is he, with an eye on the future of the country as a whole, creating and moulding healthy public opinion? It is no use his giving lulling assurances to the minorities — of a University here and something else there.

The "Ape Anduwa" slogan has now become the biggest joke of the century, even among the Sinhalese. You hear that on the pavement, in the tram, train and bus. The communal massacre, since June 5th has left smarting memories in the minds of the minorities. In an enlightened era as 1956 one wonders whether the incidents of 1915 could stand comparison. Perhaps this is the only achievement of this Government, of which Dahanayake is a pillar and Minister of Education, since it took office, and the biggest achievement of any government for many years!

It is scarcely realised that no minority community and not a few members of the majority community have spontaneously accepted the *Sinhala Only Act*. It was only for

purposes of expediency that some of them have so done. The whole thing therefore has to be examined afresh in the cold light of reason. Incidentally, for advocating this in relation to educational needs the Minister attributed motives to the Editors of the four English Newspapers in that they are doing so in order to keep their jobs. How puerile his reasoning is nowadays! Perhaps the signs of senile decay! To revert: the introduction of the Bill in Parliament produced ugly and widespread incidents in the country. They were, the blackest blot in the entire history of Governments in this country where the guardians of Law and Order turned a blind eye — nay more — watched the offences openly and shamelessly with cynic laughter on their faces. The people's police of the people's government could not touch the "people"! Even to preserve law and order! Had it not been for the intervention of the Representative of a foreign government, whose nationals it was his duty to protect, our government would not have taken action to safeguard its own people. What calamity to have a government one of which is Dahanayake who once spoke vehemently against communalism in all forms. Evidently he then spoke with the tongue in his cheek! The gulf between the two major communities is swiftly

widening. What is Dahanayake's contribution to the creating of this gulf? Cannot he even now tell his own people to have tolerance towards other minorities before he pontificates to the others. You go to the village boutique or to the fair, you see clear signs of communalism rearing its ugly head. It is sad but true that our leaders are weak in, but all the same, have a weakness for, leadership. They don't lead the masses. Instead they are led by them. That is the tragic story of contemporary Ceylon where leaders take the easy path of jettisoning their political principles and follow the populace.

Education

We will now come to the sphere in which Dahanayake is directly involved. Education. Today our educational problems have swollen up to giant proportions. The other day the Principal of a Central School, not far from Colombo, was heard to speak of the plight of many misguided youths in this country. He said many boys in his school had been offering practical subjects like handicrafts, carpentry etc. and had passed the S.S.C. Examination with them. Now, they make their regular pilgrimages to him asking

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THE PEOPLE'S CAR



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'SRI' NUMBER

Sir

I do not know whose chestnuts your correspondent *Vijaya* wishes to pull out of the fire by suggesting that there should be a no-operation campaign in the North and East against the Sinhalese SRI number plate. I am prepared to grant that the SRI numberplate in *Sinhalese Only* at this stage is a highly provocative act on the part of rather short-sighted MEP Cabinet. But even more reprehensible seems to be the fact that the so-called leaders of the Tamil Resistance Movement want others to do the fighting while they themselves go about in the safety and comfort of EN series cars.

However much I may disagree with Minister Maithripala Senanayake in his decision to enforce the SRI numberplate, I agree with him that if the leaders of the Tamil Resistance Movement were anxious to fight the SRI numberplate in *Sinhalese Only* they should have been the first to, symbolically at least, break the law.

Instead of that, we find that Vanniasingham, President of the Tamil Arasu Kadchi and G. G. Ponnambalam, leader of the Tamil

Congress, both stalwarts of the Tamil Resistance Movement, rushing in December to buy new EN series cars. Whilst they wanted to be assured of new cars to fight for the good cause, they do not want to be burdened with Sinhalese SRI numberplates.

The fact of these two gentlemen buying late EN cars was bad enough but the explanations they have devised in statements to the press make the situation more deplorable. Vanniasingham trots out a whole series of explanations as to why he bought an EN series car almost on the last date. These explanations are the "lamest" that can be conceived by human ingenuity. If he had kept silent, it would have been far better for his "good cause." *The fact he reveals as to why he had to buy a car makes it positive that he had a wonderful and glorious opportunity of leading the campaign against the Sinhalese SRI series.* He had the necessity of buying a new car, and what better than to have waited a few days and sported a Tamil *Sri* and been prosecuted for it. Why all the tedious logic about insurance companies, accidents, wrecked cars, delays and the like to hide the simple fact that he as President of the Tamil Arasu Kadchi did not want to risk his new car with a SRI numberplate? Is this all the sacrifice which this worthy leader of the Tamil cause is willing to make?

Ponnambalam

The letter of G. G. Ponnambalam makes even more disgusting reading. Boiled down, what Ponnambalam says is that "leaders" of the Resistance Movement should have EN series cars to fight the SRI numberplate lest their movement be immobilised by the Sinhalese SRI numberplate. Furthermore, he shifts the burden of buying an EN series car to a group of his supporters and advisers, who it would seem, suggested that he purchase these cars in good time. How naive and puerile these explanations are: It is well-known that G. G. Ponnambalam owns more than one car of good and recent vintage which could have carried him through lengthy campaigns without having

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an additional fleet of cars in the late EN series. And if one of the cars he recently bought was for his brother, the priest, why was it not bought in his brother's name?

I am not interested in the number of cars owned by Ponnambalam, or the specific reason why Vanniasingham rushed headlong to buy an EN series car on the last day, but as a Tamil I feel that these gentlemen have no right to ask other Tamils to resist the SRI numberplate in Sinhalese Only when these worthies had immediate and glorious opportunities of leading the campaign themselves in their new cars.

That is why I ask your correspondent the question: whose chestnuts is he wanting to pull out of the fire? Why does he not urge that Vanniasingham and Ponnambalam should wage the fight by themselves having Sinhalese SRI number cars? It would not be difficult for them to sell their present EN series cars (with the premium these cars are fetching in the North) and buying new cars with Sinhalese SRI numberplates to fight the great Tamil cause. If these gentlemen won't do it, they should give up being "leaders". In fact they should be ashamed to call themselves Tamils.

I hate the chauvinistic language policy of the MEP, but I hate even more leaders who want "others" to do the actual fighting.

Yours

YALPADI

Colombo
7.1.56



Ambulance Service

An accident can happen anywhere and at any time—at home, at work, or in the street. But if urgent medical aid is needed the ambulance will be on the spot in several minutes if you dial "03".

This is the telephone number of the Moscow Central Ambulance Station, where I met the head of the station, Alexander Shvedov, Honoured Doctor of the Russian Federation. By way of answering my questions he took me to the despatcher's hall, where on big panels signal lamps flashed periodically. A number of signal operators were sitting at a long desk facing a telephone switch-board. On the wall there was an electric chart of Moscow, with illuminated figures denoting the number of ambulances free at the substations.

In addition to the Central Ambulance Station the capital has seven substations, and by 1960 there will be twelve. The majority of the substations are situated at the big hospitals—at Botkin, Rostokino and other hospitals. Calls come from all parts of the city for ambulances to deal with all kinds of cases—a child falls from the second storey and injures himself, there is a case of poisoning at a chemical plant, someone has a heart attack in the street, a pregnant woman faints, or an excited mother rings for the ambulance for her child who has swallowed a three-kopek coin.

Two Minutes

The signal operator takes down the address and passes it on to the despatcher. The latter presses a bell which rings simultaneously in the rooms of the doctors, the nurses and the drivers, and an ambulance leaves for its destination in less than two minutes.

"What is the procedure when you get a more urgent call?" I asked.

"Would you like to see?" asked the head of the station.

In a couple of minutes we had set off in his car. "Look over there," he said, "on the top of a tall building at Krasnye Vorota, you can see some aeriels. That is our central radio-despatching centre which functions right round the clock."

Alexander Shvedov turned a switch on the control panel, and immediately we heard the voice of the radio operator on duty.

Shvedov explained that a two-way conversation between the radio-despatching centre and the car can be conducted at a range of 30-35 kilometres while a oneway order from that centre to a car can be picked up at a distance of as much as 60-70 kilometres.

The Moscow Central Ambulance Station and its branches handle over 1,000 cases per 24 hours. Experienced doctors are required to give rapid and qualified aid, so only doctors with at least five years' experience are allowed to work at the ambulance stations.

Today the Moscow Central Ambulance Station employs 152 highly skilled doctors and scores of nurses. Staff

A doctor works six hours a day. If he is on duty for 24 hours he gets four days off. For good service more than 100 doctors of the Central Station have been decorated with orders and medals, eight of them having received the supreme

decoration of the Order of Lenin. The mail of the station includes scores of letters expressing gratitude for the timely help given by its staff.

When a doctor is called out on a case he is informed of the closest hospital to which he can escort his patient. Every big Moscow hospital has beds reserved to accommodate urgent ambulance cases. For instance, the famous Sklifosovsky Institute has 40 beds set aside for ambulance cases.

The ambulance service, including the subsequent treatment, is provided free of charge at the expense of the state, which allocates ample funds for medical services. The budget of the Moscow Central Ambulance Station alone is 22 million roubles, and one can imagine the extent of the funds that are used for ambulance services in all the towns and workers' settlements of the country.

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WEEK by WEEK

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he crossed over. And Gate Mudaliyar Kariapper crossed over. But he was not made Chairman of the Gal Oya Development Board. There that's why we said it was wrong to give credence to rumours.

However, Gate Mudaliyar Kariapper, as far as we can see, is not interested in becoming Chairman of the Gal Oya Development Board. But in his recent speech at Gal Oya he says that much could not be expected of the Board when its chief administrators were 200 miles away. Is it perhaps only a coincidence that Gate Mudaliyar Kariapper lives only within 15 miles of Gal Oya? Gate Mudaliyar Kariapper all know is an honourable man. One cannot buy him over to one's Party with the promises of the Chairmanship of the Gal Oya Development Board. And what if he lives within 15 miles of Gal Oya? It doesn't prove a thing. Gate Mudaliyar Kariapper is only interested in the people of this country. And he is a true blooded patriot. His son-in-law Mr. M. M. Musapha M.P. once said something about his father-in-law being a turncoat and quite capable of having been bought over for valuable consideration. But all are agreed it is nonsense. Which son-in-law speaks well of his father-in-law especially when the father-in-law is an honourable man?

GMOA

The Government Medical Officers' Association has done well in reaching agreement with the Government on the main demands of the Association—namely the abolition of private practice and the readjustment of salary scales.

As we have commented on an earlier occasion the struggle of the G.M.O.A. was not for the winning of cheap political victories, but for something far more important. Now that agreement has been reached and the problem resolved we must say it is a victory for both the G.M.O.A. and the government, and no side can crow about the victory to the exclusion of the other.

The newspapers have already devoted much space to the details of the agreement that was reached and it would not profit anyone very much to repeat the details of the agreement here.

Though the blood and thunder of the GMOA battle has died down, many scars have been left on certain specialists who staged a last-minute struggle to keep private practice going for ever. Though they have been given five years to make all the money they want as part time government doctors, many "specialists" have lost reputation and caste. Some of them, it is said,

in the past, had pretended they were saintly creatures because they claimed they did not take fees from certain poor persons. The fact was that these gentlemen could afford to go easy on fees once a particular income tax margin was reached, and it was also a good thing to have a reputation as one who did not extort fees to convince Income Tax officials that the returns sent in were correct.

But in the GMOA battle these persons showed themselves in their true colours. One specialist in particular seems to have waged a stern battle, and today he is shown to be a wolf in sheep's clothing. He wanted the system of private practice and chits, to continue but he had so far hoodwinked everybody into the belief that he accepted only such fees as thrust down his unwilling throat. Scratch a "specialist" and you will get a shark.

All's well that ends well, and it is to be hoped that in the five-year period some of the experts and specialists will begin to realise that money making is not everything in life, even though we live in a money conscious era.

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COMMENT

UNP MAYOR

The press report that the British Government is seeking to build a new naval and air base in the Maldives Islands raises vital issues not only for Ceylon, but all countries in South East Asia. It is difficult to understand why Britain needs military bases in the Indian Ocean now. If she is seeking to build new landing fields for the passage of aircraft it would be understandable, but a naval and military base such as the proposed one in the Maldives seems out of place in the modern era in Asia. In the age of colonialism, naval and military bases in Asiatic countries may have been inevitable, but when practically all countries in this region are independent, it is strange that Britain wants to spend millions to build new bases presumably to replace the one at Trincomalee.

The only inference which can be drawn is that the British Government is still clinging to its old policies of colonial supremacy. The recent attempt to subjugate Egypt once again by the force of arms from the Cyprus base is clear indication that Britain has not yet forsown its die-hard colonial policies. What other purpose could there be for a base in the Maldives except to keep countries like Ceylon, Malaya, India and Burma under threat of attack or military interference? Just as it was argued that the Suez was the life line of Britain and that the U.K. was justified in attacking Egypt when Nasser nationalised the canal, a time may arise when the British Government may declare that the sea routes converging on Ceylon constituted the "life-line" of Britain and launch an attack on Ceylon if a Government should be set up here which does not please Whitehall. From the experience of Egypt, it would seem that Tory Britain would recognise the political independence in her former colonies and dependencies only when its leaders acknowledge the economic supremacy and the investments of imperial England.

In these circumstances, Ceylon and all other countries in South East Asia should register a vigorous protest against the setting up of a

military base in the Maldives. At a time when the Afrasian powers are demanding the liquidation of all bases and military pacts, it is regrettable that Britain should seek to build a new one in the Maldives. This is a matter which must be taken up not only by the Colombo Powers immediately but by all the Bandung Powers.

MAYOR

When the United National Party swept the polls at the Colombo Municipal Elections recently, Mr. J. R. Jayewardena played the role of the prodigal son to a nicety, and claimed that the reformed party would do its best to provide the ratepayers of the city with an efficient Municipal administration.

Frankly we were quite sceptical of Mr. Jayewardena's avowals, but were willing to give the party elected by the people of the city a try. We even imagined that the councillors elected would leave behind them the bickerings that have come to be associated with them, jettison the mad rush for office, and get down to the business of running the Council efficiently. We admit we were wrong.

Hardly a week had passed when the scramble for office in the Council started with a vengeance. And the Mayor's stakes were in full swing.

Candidates for the Mayoralty and the Deputy Mayoralty placed themselves in the hands of king-makers, secret pacts were entered into and broken overnight, and the old buying and selling game started anew. And once again the interests of the thousands of ratepayers in the city are being sacrificed at the altar of the self-interest of a handful of politicians.

We can see no justification for the proposal of the right-wing group to elect a Mayor and Deputy Mayor for each of the three years of the life of the Council. The Mayoral term was fixed for a period of three years, because it was felt that one year was hardly sufficient to formulate a plan for the city and carry it out. The position of a Mayor as chief executive of the Council is such that he can initiate a scheme and

carry it to fruition, with the sanction of the Council of course. But the success of the scheme depends to a large extent on the efforts of the Mayor, and the former one year term was found to be too short for this purpose.

It was specifically because there was a jumble of schemes, enthusiastically initiated but never completed that the Mayoral term of three years, was fixed. The proposal of the U.N.P. group to have a Mayor and Deputy Mayor for each of the three years, is a ruse to circumvent a very healthy provision of an administration of the Council and would reduce it to a farce. The history of the United National Party is repeating itself. It is no secret that the party had on earlier occasions adopted unfair tactics to circumvent, even the law, failing which they changed the law. We imagined and the Party itself promised that they would be good boys in future. But they seem to be up to the same old tricks again.

The proposal of the right-wing group, therefore, is a blatant betrayal of the desire on the part of few persons to hold office. Characterised by shamelessness and motivated by self-interest, they stand exposed before their electors, as a bunch of power hungry politicians, who though sworn to look after the interests of the ratepayers, are determined to look after their own.

The political manoeuvres going on behind the scenes are reminiscent of the days which eventually led to the appointment of a Bribery Commission. Even the buying and selling that goes on in the market place looks cleaner than the buying and selling that goes on among the members of the right-wing group, for office in the Council. How can we expect a fair administration in the Council, when those who are in charge of it, behave in this unseemly fashion?

The claim that the party has learnt its lessons from the defeat of April 1956 is to say the least, false. For as soon as they were elected to power, the lessons were forgotten and they started dancing the same jigs once again.

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LICENCE



I see no difference in principle between the propriety (or is it not impropriety) of the Minister of Education sending an Admit Bearer chit to the hospital authorities and the Minister of Health sending a "Transfer Bearer" chit to the education authorities. One stinks as much as the other.

At least now the government and all its Ministers should realise the disastrous consequences of allowing politicians to interfere in the administration of the government departments. The rot has set in, and is eating fast into the administration, and soon we will have a rotten public service.

It is foreseeing this perhaps that all the more responsible newspapers like the *Ceylon Daily News*, the *Ceylon Observer* and the *Morning Times* campaigned in their columns and editorially that interference by politicians in the administration of the public service must cease. The *Tribune*, too, in its own way, condemned in unmistakable terms the pernicious practice and called upon the Prime Minister to put a halt to anocratic action on the part of the politicians.

But the *Times of Ceylon* has for some reason or the other taken up an indifferent attitude towards all this. Sometime ago the *Morning Times* waged a relentless war against the "Admit Bearer" chit system which was prevalent in the General Hospital. Both in news stories which they hunted out from the General Hospital, and in their editorial columns they performed a useful service towards maintaining a clean and impartial hospital administration. But the *Times of Ceylon* which I find "normally takes over stories from the *Morning Times*" did not touch these stories concerning the Minister of Health, and her Ministry, even with a barge pole. Even the *Observer*, took over these stories and worked on them but they were not good enough for the *Times of Ceylon*, the sister newspaper of the *Morning Times*.

Then came the sorry spectacle (on which I had commented in an earlier issue) of the *Times of*

Ceylon holding aloft a torch for the Minister of Health as far as the G. M. O. A. was concerned. Mad stories of doctors being imported from China, Russia, Germany and Timbuctoo were put into the mouth of the Minister of Health and an attempt was made to break the strike of the G.M.O.A., even before it was launched.

I gave the benefit of all my doubts to the *Times of Ceylon*, and thought that the *Times of Ceylon* had good reason for not backing the G.M.O.A. in its demands, and for not taking over the "Admit Bearer" chit system stories.

Until the other day when the *Ceylon Observer*, published the top story of the row between the Minister of Health and the Minister of Education, I was prepared to be generous. My friend, Sherlock Holmes, was at the Education Ministry at the time of the incident and saw for himself two *Times of Ceylon* reporters and the *Ceylon Observer* reporter, collecting the details of the story. Later in the evening the *Ceylon Observer* carried in its late edition a banner headline story of the row, and the *Times of Ceylon* carried the same story in one paragraph at the bottom of the first page, in an inconspicuous corner. I cannot imagine that a top newsman like the Editor of the *Times of Ceylon* would have failed to see a good story when he saw one. And the only conclusion I am left with, is that the Minister of Health is specially "looked after" by the *Times of Ceylon*. The why and the wherefore, please do not ask me. All I know is that the Minister is a protected animal.

I know I have been talking journalistic shop. But I would like to see our dailies taking an independent stand on all matters that come before them. The *Tribune* does, and it expects all other papers to do so. Another matter that keeps puzzling me is why the Editor-in-Chief of the *Times of Ceylon* Ltd. who I suppose is in a position of authority *vis-a-vis* the Editor of the *Times of Ceylon* cannot take to task persons responsible for lapses

of the type I have mentioned above. Or is the designation Editor-in-Chief merely a nominal one?

To get back to where I started from, interference in all matters of public service by politicians is becoming more the rule than the exception. The Prime Minister must cry halt to this non-sense before it is too late, or else he will have to face the sorry situation of seeing the complete collapse of the public service.

Nationalisation

Last week's *Sunday Observer* published the draft Transport Bill. It was a scoop, but it is not about the scoop nor the merits of the Bill I wish to discuss in this note. What worries me is some information which has been brought to me by Sherlock Holmes.

The *Tribune* sleuth assures me that even though the Transport Bill is still not law and though the Transport Board is still in embryo, certain persons have been "engaged to do some work" which arises only in a nationalised transport service. How these persons came to be appointed *now* is the question which Sherlock Holmes wishes to raise?

Were these posts advertised? Is this method of getting persons to do "transport" work *now* a surreptitious way of smuggling certain persons into the employ of the Transport Board when it is set up? Once these "experts" are in the Transport section *now*, would it not be easy to incorporate them into the staff of the new Transport Board?

The two persons alleged to be *now* employed by the Transport authorities are an engineer and an accountant. The engineer, though fully qualified, is now an old and infirm man, whilst the greatest virtue of the accountant seems to be that he is of the same "breed" as an important VIP in the Department.

I do not know whether these two gentlemen are doing some voluntary and honorary work in the transport

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Just Briefly

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department, but if they are being permitted to do this, for them to qualify for selection to the new Transport Board staff — well, it is something about which there should be vigorous protest.

Licence Mystery

Another mystery which the Transport Department has set the public is the size of the 1977 Revenue Licence for motor vehicles. I received my licence a few days ago and I found that it was far larger than the normal licence holder I have used all these years. What was the need for enlarging the size of the revenue licence?

The only reason which has been suggested is that some importer of licence holders stands to benefit greatly. All the old holders are rendered useless without any warning. But what is significant is that only one particular importer seems to have had advance information about the change in the size of the licence and seems to have obtained stocks in time for the 1957 licensing period. My inquiries reveal that one importer has been able to steal a march over everybody else.

What really is the racket? If there is some logical reason for enlarging the size of the licence (like wanting more space to write particulars about the vehicle), then why was not sufficient notice given about the change, so that at least all importers could have imported them? How was it that only one importer had this special privilege of knowing in time that there was to be a change in the size? Why were motorists not notified? Why are they being penalised in this way? There is something strange and mysterious in the way the Transport Department seems to be functioning these days!

Crisis Ahead

continued from first page.

any National Plan for economic development. And if the Government concentrates on drawing up a proper National Plan without any delay, the tension and disharmony which exist owing to the stagnant economic structure of this island will tend to ease. When such a Plan is implemented, the tensions will disappear.

Interference

Instead of concerted and coherent action by the Cabinet as a whole, the country today is witnessing the miserable spectacle of every Minister operating as a Prime Minister. Every Minister in his individual capacity seeks to solve all the problems of the country. There is no doubt that the problem of bureaucracy — a hangover from the past — is very acute, but this cannot be set right through Ministerial interference in transfers through chits and the like. An entire nation and an entire machinery of bureaucratic government cannot be changed by individualistic and anarchic acts of petty interference by Ministers on behalf of men and women they know.

In the days of the UNP, Ministers and their friends confined their corrupt practices and interference strictly to matters of high finance. Import quotas, export licences, exchange control permits birthday and new year honours, distinguished citizenship, residence permits and the like were the favours which



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were bought and sold for a consideration. The high and mighty in the UNP interfered only rarely, and that covertly in the transfers of teachers and others in the so-called lower rungs of the social hierarchy. The UNP knew the gentle art of securing the right transfers and

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POWER VACUUM

The most significant news of international importance for the New Year is the Eisenhower-Dulles plan to seek military dominance of the Middle East. Following the withdrawal of the British and French troops from the Suez, Dulles after a meeting of NATO, propounded the thesis of US determination to resist the expansion of "international communism" in the Middle East. This line was strongly advocated by die-hard Vice-President Nixon, and was a little later supported by Eisenhower.

Balaraman, writing to the *Madras Hindu* from Washington on January 2, described the situation in the following terms :

"The U.S. Government's announcement that it is assuming responsibility for preventing any Soviet thrust into the Middle East, militarily in case of overt Soviet Aggression and economically through expanded aid to thwart Communist infiltration and subversion, continues to be exaggerated here as a new Eisenhower doctrine, but there is really nothing new about it; it is only a reaffirmation of a policy which the United States has been following since the days of Mr. Truman in Europe and South-East Asia. If there is anything special about it, it is perhaps the emphasis that this policy is applicable to the Middle East, too, and secondly, that the seal of approval by Congress is being sought for it by the President."

He emphasised that no details had been worked out as to how this policy was to be implemented, but that it was stressed by State Department officials that the US would always work through the United Nations. After commenting on the fact that action through the United Nations would be unlikely in view of the Russian veto

and the fact that the majority of the Afrasian countries would vote with the communist bloc to prevent a two-thirds majority, Balaraman went on to say :

"U.N. Members, however, consider all this as largely hypothetical because they discount any possibility of overt Russian aggression. In their opinion subversion and infiltration are the real problems there not aggression and they find no new answer for it in the so called Eisenhower doctrine.

"Political commentators think the reason why Washington has had to reaffirm its already existing policy so grandiloquently now as something new is because some of the President's recent statements and the position taken by America on Suez could have created the mistaken impression abroad, specially in

Russia, that Mr. Eisenhower is a pacifist and neutralist and will not do anything dynamic to check the Soviet if it meant risking war, nor take any action outside the United Nations. Such an impression, it is feared, might result in the Soviet miscalculating American intentions and making some move which may eventually lead to war."

Britain

In Britain, the reaction to Eisenhower's proposal seems to be acidic in spite of the fact that men like Gaitskell have rushed to welcome the pronouncement. Shelvankar writing to the *Madras Hindu* on January 2, described the situation thus :

"The welcome that has been accorded here to the reported new American moves with regard to the Middle East is a half hearted and sceptical welcome, and running through it is an undercurrent of resentment as well.

"There is resentment because, as the British see it, if Americans had adopted some such position earlier, the course of events in the Middle East would have been very different and Britain would have been spared the humiliations and setbacks of the recent months. Besides, there is a deep-rooted conviction here that America was responsible in

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World Affairs

(continued from page 547)

the first place for creating a power vacuum in the Middle East by using her influence to oust Britain and France from that area. Britain, it is said, had all along been urging America to change its policy and if her advice had been heeded, the present situation need never have arisen.

"Now that Washington appears to have decided to step into the Middle East in a big way, the move is generally interpreted here as an American attempt to take over the Middle East, which Britain and France had hitherto controlled. A typical comment is the cartoon in one of the morning papers to-day which depicts Mr. Eisenhower, Mr. Dulles and Mr. Nixon all wearing the uniforms of British 'Empire-

builders' and leading an army into the Middle East, protesting all the while, "but we of course are strictly non-colonial." Nevertheless, the prospect of establishment of American domination in the Middle East is hailed with relief, since it is considered at least to be a guarantee that British and European oil supplies would not be allowed to fall into Russian hands"

However, in spite of the fact that US has decided to throw in her lot with the Western Powers in the Middle East, there seems to be a great deal of doubt in Britain whether this plan of Eisenhower can be implemented without the US joining the Baghdad Pact.

India

Opinion in India is very much against the new Eisenhower plan for the Middle East. Papers like the *Hindu* as early as January 3 had editorially hinted that the US plan would only strengthen war blocs like the Baghdad Pact and

not help to stabilise peace in the Middle East.

Premier Nehru has set out the position very clearly when he declared at the Congress Sessions on Sunday that the power vacuum in West Asia resulting from the withdrawal of British influence must be filled by the "strength and progress" of the countries in the region. Any attempt by any outside power to fill the vacuum was fraught with the greatest danger to the peace of the world.

Nehru further emphasised that any attempt to fill the power vacuum in any area by outside military force would only invite other powers to join the race to increase their own influence in that area. It would solve no problem.

The Baghdad Pact powers are the only countries which have welcomed the Eisenhower plan for the Middle East (or West Asia, as Nehru calls the area). Moscow and Peking have condemned it in no uncertain terms as colonialism under a new garb.

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DAHANAYAKE

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him to recommend them for this white-collar job or the other, and invariably in view of these subjects their applications are turned down. These youths, he said, are becoming frustrated and can very well be a source of great danger to this country. One cannot blame them. One has only to blame the sloppy educational system of Dahanayake. There is no diversification or bifurcation — those much promised ones. The present government is perpetrating and perpetuating the misdeeds of its predecessor — in much greater degree. Communal segregation of students, which has now become a permanent feature in our schools, will leave an ineradicable imprint in the minds of the generations to come. There cannot be any unity among a people, to whom when young, the idea of separatism was infused by the compartmentalisation of them into various language streams. Heads of schools are ordered — often by telephone — to permit withdrawn candidates to sit for public examinations. Merit is no more to be a deciding factor in examinations for Government Scholarships — perhaps this examination, for a start! Their award is to be on a communal ratio. Discipline and goodwill among teacher and taught are now mere memories of the past. Respect for each other and respect for authority are no more to be. There are already indications of them — in the public life of this country. Though bachelors are no good judges of women, the bachelor Minister has thought it fit to go contra to all canons of customary courtesy to decree that it was immoral for girls to high-jump — notwithstanding the advice sought by him and given by the leading Girls' Schools in Colombo. His coup de grace was his suggestion to have interpreters in the University Lecture room (thoalkayas) who will make better court jesters than the Minister himself. If these are an earnest of things to come, the people may well live in hope and die in despair. Is he not actually helping the people to slide into the bottomless pit of national destruction — never to rise again? His concern for his community seems to rob his thought of its logic. Apparently, his office in Slave Island

is a loony bin to think up all these novel thoughts of reform. It will be idle to pretend that the educational ship is sailing smoothly. The people cannot easily forget his hideous attempt at lowering the educational standards in this country: to level down the best to the worst schools. It will hang on them like a vulture. He who has loosed the horrors upon the unborn generations, will before long feel the shattering strokes of just retribution when our schools turn out every year into the world thousands of students who are really half-baked but who will claim to be educated (and demand not jobs on land but in stream-lined offices only to swell the ranks of the unemployed) who, Dahanayake has this week discovered, will be powerful enough to turn the Government out of office. And the remedy? His remedy is worse than the disease!

One is astonished by the velocity of change that has characterised the thinking of this man Dahanayake. When one adds up all that has overtaken Dahanayake in recent months, it is difficult to believe that this one-time great hope of our country, who could very well have been a good link between the various communities inhabiting this fair Isle, is doing all the damage to its educational and social structure. It is a curious turn of fate's wheel that Dahanayake is today described by the same attributes with which he qualified his predecessors in office: clown, mental pervert, mad-hatter and so on. It cannot be gainsaid that those who call him so are less national minded or that they are less enthusiastic about their community's cause.

Achievements

A few weeks ago a Sunday news paper featured a newsstory in its front page giving prominence to Dahanayake as having recounted his record of the ten best achievements since assuming office. To quote a few from memory, the most number of cartoons he has appeared in; the most number of times he has hit banner headlines etc. To say the least, they are the nebulous expressions of a hazy mind. No recent issue of the Punch would have amused their readers as much as this one. It is said that wisdom grows with age! Dahanayake is an exception to the rule. His

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Dahanayake

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political degeneracy has set in even before he has begun to age. In the little wards of his mind he has an exaggerated view of his abilities. He is unmindful of the advice and suggestions of educationists who see educational problems at first hand. Instead, for the first time in the history of parliamentary democracy in this country, a Minister took the unusual step of himself summarily dismissing one of his chief advisors: the head of an important department under him, a matter beyond his purview. All his actions and activities are definitely inimical to the future well-being of this country. His cussedness and perversity can only bring ruin to the country. Almost any school-boy with preterce to a classical education will be familiar with the Greek saying:

"Cities will not cease from troubles Till philosophers become kings."

This man who claims to be a nationalist should first learn the rudiments of nationalism - should first learn what nationalism is. He little knows that nationalism of his brand is like fire. It can be a destructive torch spreading havoc and misery. We have all seen what happens when nationalism is expressed in the form of Nazism and Fascism and rulers fan its flames to divert attention from their own misrule. The cynical advice which Shakespear's King Henry IV gave on his death bed to his son :

"Therefore, my Henry
Be it thy course to busy giddy
minds
with foreign quarrels."

The local equivalent of this foreign quarrel is the internal one, communalism. Dahanayake has quali-

fied himself to be the head of a coterie of individuals who in their lucid intervals think they can beat all the people all the time with this communal big stick, setting up one community against another. Their day of reckoning is at hand, and they will soon realise the folly of their misguided enthusiasm.

It is said that "Those whom the gods seek to destroy they first make mad". Perhaps that is just what is happening in Dahanayake's case.

With apologies to Dryden this may well serve as Dahanayake's epitaph :

"Stiff in opinion, always in the
wrong
Was everything by starts and
nothing long
And in the course of one re-
volving moon
Was chemist, statesman and
buffoon."

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Comment

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A *Sunday Observer* news story said: "The Mayoral election this year promises to be entirely a party affair played according to party rules. There will be no dark horses and no last minute throat cutting once the issue is decided on January 15 at which meeting Sir John Kotelawala will preside I was assured by the High Command of the U.N.P. that there will be no "Geros" this year.

A heavy responsibility rests with the U.N.P. leaders. If they are to confirm their claim that the U.N.P. is a reformed party this is their chance. Merit and merit alone should decide the claim for the Mayoralty and Deputy Mayoralty. Compromises and appeasement should be rejected and the interests of the ratepayers of the city should be consulted and placed foremost in consideration.

Then, and then only will we believe that the U.N.P. has undergone a welcome metamorphosis. Then, and then only will the people gain confidence in the persons in whom they have placed their trust. Then, and then only will we have a clean city in every sense of the word.

Crisis Ahead

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obtaining admission to hospitals for their privileged friends without raising a hornet's nest.

But the MEP which came to power on the revolt of the middle classes against the age-old supremacy of feudal aristocracy and the "new rich" created by European colonial commercialism, seem to be concerned only with transfers of teachers and admissions to hospitals.

There is no doubt that the swabasha teacher and the hospital patient of the lower income brackets have suffered grievously at the hands of the bureaucrat in our officials and doctors. Instead of fighting the system which gives rise to bureaucracy and inequality, instead of working out fundamental solutions to permanent problems, the MEP Cabinet seems to think that if they interfere in a few transfers and shout aloud about official high-handedness, the spots in our bureaucratic leopards will disappear. If they do not realise anything else, it is time they do know that the UNP and the enemies of the MEP will lose no opportunity to discredit the Government. Newspapers which were silent in the days of the UNP will expose all stories of MEP Ministerial interference.

The future is bleak if the Government does not immediately recognise the writing on the wall about the impending economic crisis and the racial and religious tensions which are likely to burst soon and formulate policies which will build national unity and further economic development.

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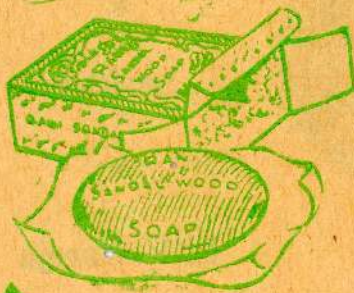
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