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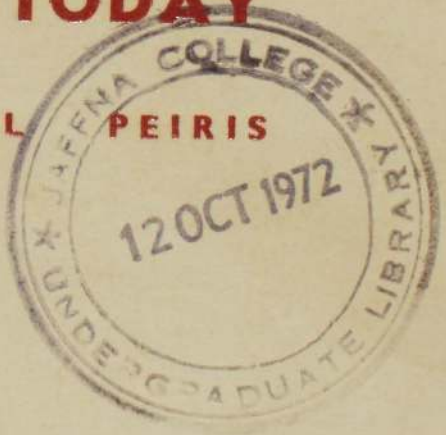
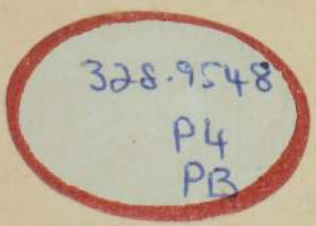
BY DENZIL PEIRIS





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BACKGROUND TO PARTIES & POLITICS IN CEYLON TODAY

by

DENZIL PEIRIS

MARCH 1958

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The author of this book, Denzil Peiris, is the editor of the Janata and the Silumina. As a journalist of several years experience he has kept in close touch with the important figures of Ceylon politics as well as with the obscure voters in towns and villages who put the politicians into power.

Peiris also edited Jana, a magazine of Asian news for several years. He covered the Bandung Conference for this journal.

He has travelled in the United States, in Europe, the Middle East and India. He has made a special study of developments in the Middle East and India. A book he has written on the Middle East is now being printed and should be out shortly.

Peiris also works as the local correspondent for the Associated Press of America, the world's largest news agency.

He has made several analyses of Ceylon politics for the Associated Press and these articles have been published in the New York Post, and in Canadian newspapers. With the greater interest taken in Ceylon politics outside this country after the M.E.P. came into power, his contributions to the A.P. have been widely used in the world's press.

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PREFACE

These articles have emerged in a very great measure from the daily editorial conferences I have had with the Janata news staff. I am most grateful to Mr. D. D. Wettasinghe, the Janata's Chief Sub-editor; Mr. Rajah Tillekaratne, its News Editor and Mr. Tissa Goonetilleke, the Features Editor, for the stimulating ideas they often threw out when we tried to find the wider perspectives for the day-to-day news.

The conclusions I have arrived at are my own and my colleagues do not necessarily share my views.

For the section on Ceylon's foreign policy I have drawn on some of those who actively participated in framing it for several years.

I must also acknowledge my irredeemable debt to another, who insists on being anonymous, who advised me on the presentation of the material and encouraged me in its writing.

My grateful thanks are due to Mr. Reggie Candappa for designing the cover of this book.

DENZIL PEIRIS

THE REVOLUTION OF 1956

A variety of reasons have been offered for the ignominous defeat of the U. N. P. in the elections of 1956. The most frequent explanation is that in eight years of corrupt practices and the shameless perversion of public office for personal gain some of the leading figures of the U. N. P. had turned the people in disgust to a new regime. Another is that Sir John Kotelawala so outraged Buddhist sensibilities by participating with singular lack of prudence in the barbecuing of a calf that the people used the first opportunity they had to turn him out. Yet another is the shameless conduct of the courtesans of the U. N. P.

All these reasons no doubt did contribute to the downfall of the U. N. P. but they are not an adequate explanation for the ousting of a coterie of politicians who in various disguises and in varying degrees of strength had dominated Ceylon politics for nearly twenty five years under the Donoughmore Constitution, in the brief interlude of the Soulbury constitution, and, finally, in independent Ceylon.

The argument that political corruption alone destroyed the U. N. P. is weakened when one observes that those who raved about the U. N. P.'s abuse of power and corrupt conduct have refrained from protesting against the outrageous misdeeds of the M. E. P. As for the calf taken from the cold stores for roasting one should bear in mind that the people tolerated the far more reprehensible slaying of a deer by the King of Nepal in Buddha Jayanthi year in an area sacred to Buddhists. And the M. E. P. can match, not in numbers, but in the style of performance the U. N. P.'s ladies of pleasure.

The fact is that the defeat of the U. N. P. was inexorably inevitable. It was the result of the maturing of the long submerged Sinhalese intelligentsia. It was an event as inevitable as the French Revolution or the dramatic events in world history which signify that one class has been pushed out and another taken its place as the predominant political group.

There had been two streams in the movement for winning power from the British. They were marked from each other in that they represented different layers of Ceylon society.

In 1956 the larger stream—larger because it represented a greater number—submerged the smaller group of westernised landowners and businessmen. Both streams flowed in an important sense from the British conquest of Ceylon.

One of the consequences of British rule was to encourage the growth of a new class of people who became associated with Britain's commercial interests in Ceylon, as well as with its administrative system.

This class emerged primarily out of the maritime peoples who had already come into contact with the Dutch and their trading institutions. This class functioned as contractors who erected the estate factories: it grew out of those who helped to transport, first, coffee and, then, tea and rubber from the hill country to the ports of Galle and Colombo. It also developed out of those who served the British in the Kachcheries and other governmental institutions and in commercial establishments. At this time most parts of Ceylon were self-sufficient in their modest needs and operated on a predominantly barter economy. The money this new group earned gave it a commanding position and helped it to buy land, open up plantations in coconut and rubber and exploit mines. A Ceylonese middle class of rich landowners and businessmen had arisen. It was later expanded to include lawyers and doctors who were also landowners. This group learned English and adopted Western manners partly because it helped them in their economic life.

This is not a class unique to Ceylon. Similar groups who also affected the ways of the West arose in most colonies of the European powers, both in Asia and in the Middle East. They were satellites which moved in the orbit of the European commercial conquest of Asia and the Middle East.

British rule in Ceylon also stirred into existence a less well-to-do middle layer of small businessmen and traders in sundry goods, especially in the new towns which thrived around the plantations. It also created a class of mudalalis, or middle men, who acquired the produce of small holding peasants in exchange for dried fish and curry stuffs.

With the spread of secular education a rural intelligentsia of Sinhalese school teachers and notaries and Ayurvedic physicians too grew rapidly. In addition the changes which

the British effected provoked angry resentment among Buddhist monks and others who had up to then played a role of consequence in Ceylon.

The movement for political change was dominated at first by the westernised group of landowners, businessmen and professionals. What they wanted was a greater share in political power which was being exclusively controlled by the British officials and western commercial groups. The Ceylonese landowner and professional wanted political power in order to see that the amenities that were provided the English planter and businessman were also extended to the Ceylonese landowner. They also chafed at restrictions placed on Ceylonese in the public services and the fact that certain jobs were not available to the Ceylonese.

The early political demands of the Ceylonese were based on the needs of this class of Ceylonese landowners and professionals.

Once again, it may be observed there is a close parallel between the political demands initially raised in Ceylon and the beginnings of political agitation in the other European colonies.

The Indian National Congress emerged, in great measure, because the higher posts of the Indian Civil Service were closed to Indians. In Syria and Lebanon and in Egypt the first stirrings of political activity were directed to win wider concessions to the group of landowners and their sons from the foreign rulers, whether British or French or Ottoman Turk.

Out of such self-interest, undoubtedly tinged with patriotic zeal, came the Reforms Movement in Ceylon. Its pioneer spokesmen were Sir James Peiris, Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam, Sir Baron Jayatilaka. At a later date the demands were pressed by Mr. D. S. Senanayake.

But this reform movement did not want to eliminate the British altogether from Ceylon. It aspired at first to a junior partnership and later to something not more than Dominion Status within the British Commonwealth. In fact, the full freedom which Ceylon obtained was a bonus dividend from the work which India and Burma had done for Asian freedom.

The westernised bourgeoisie were afraid of the rising tide of socialistic agitation and they thought the British connection would give them a measure of protection from revolutionary movements.

An equally powerful reason was that the big Ceylonese landowner and businessman found in Britain a good, sometimes the only, market for his coconut, rubber and tea and British ships helped to haul his goods to western markets.

When freedom came, political power passed into the hands of this group of landowners and professionals represented in the United National Party.

Between them and the English owners of large tea and rubber plantations and commercial firms there was not a fundamental conflict of interests. Both were interested in seeing that the workers did not get out of hand or agitate too militantly for higher wages which could cut into profits. But differences did arise between them and the London buyers of their produce on prices.

The top hat and frock coat which Mr. D. S. Senanayake incongruously affected in imitation of the previous British rulers were the visible ceremonial symbol of the broad community of interests and solidarity between the Ceylonese landowners and the British plantation owners.

While the westernised landowners were advancing to dress themselves in the full vestments of political authority the numerically larger layer of the Sinhalese middle class of small businessmen, school teachers, ayurvedic physicians and other sections of the intelligentsia with an oriental outlook, too, were stirring.

Initially they could not press their point of view because they lacked the vote. Their agitation at first was against the hybridisation of Sinhalese society. They protested against the imitation of the west, the adoption of western names, of western habits and dress, and the neglect of national culture.

In literature the writings of Piyadasa Sirisena expressed the views of this group, who feared that the values of traditional Sinhalese society were being swamped by the dominant western society. On the platform the preachings of Anagarika

Dharmapala and of Migettuwatte Gunananda helped to develop the aspirations of this strata.

As Sinhalese education was more widely provided the numbers of the Sinhalese intelligentsia increased. But this class found its position pathetic. Education did not make them any longer eager to be farmers or to cultivate the village lands which their fathers had tilled. In addition, with the rapid increase of population and the consequent fragmentation of lands agriculture could not yield them a decent standard of living.

Their training had made them suitable for clerical occcupations. But they lacked such employment because one needed a knowledge of English to get a post as subordinate as that of a peon in the public service or in the mercantile establishments. The most they could aspire to be was a village school teacher and, if they had the means to continue studies, an ayurvedic physician. Sometimes they could be clerks in a village boutique.

Up to 1931 this class—possibly in numbers the second largest strata of Ceylon society—was politically ineffective. It lacked the vote to make its demands felt and the pressures arising from its distress were not reflected in the legislatures.

It was the Donoughmore Constitution which began the liberation of this group. The vote which was extended in Ceylon to all adults irrespective of income or educational attainments, as it was restricted in the past, gave them political strength.

This class was also reinforced by the Sinhalese speaking small trader and businessman and the small landowner who resented the inferior position into which they had been forced by the westernised Colombo dwelling folk who regarded them as socially inferior and despised them as uncultivated rustics.

The revolution of 1956, worked through the election which put the M. E. P. into power, indicated the shift of political power from the westernised bourgeoisie into the hands of the national bourgeoisie and petit-bourgeoisie who lived in the small towns and villages. It was the outcome of the frustrations, economic and social, felt by the peoples who lived mainly in the rural areas.

Although the results of the elections took by surprise all political commentators and even Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, who profited most from it, the evidence was available as far back as 1947 that the revolution was on its way. The elections of 1947 showed a close balance between the party of big landowners organised in the U. N. P. and the opposition which represented all those who had been shut off from the fruits of political power.

It was only the astute manoeuvring of Mr. D. S. Senanayake which helped the U. N. P. to stabilise itself and increase its strength by seducing with Cabinet jobs and Junior Ministerships the politically avaricious in the Opposition.

The elections of 1952 which gave Mr. Dudley Senanayake an overwhelming majority over the opposition was a freak verdict. The ghost of Mr. D. S. Senanayake carried his son to victory and the sentimental affection the people had for the orphaned Dudley helped his progress.

In 1956, on the other hand, the grievances of the Sinhalese intelligentsia had reached a critical point and unemployment among this group had created virulent resentments among them against the English section who were shutting them out of profitable jobs.

It is true there were a number of causes which the M. E. P. were supporting. Such as the recommendations of the Buddhist Commission, the promise to enforce total prohibition, and the hint it would establish a Buddhistic state in Ceylon. But to suggest that the M. E. P. won primarily because it stood for total prohibition or the Buddhist Commission's report would be incorrect.

In fact once it came to power the M. E. P. dragged its feet on implementing the recommendations of the Buddhist Commission which Mr. Bandaranaike and the other stalwarts of the M. E. P. had accepted with a show of religious zeal usually reserved for the veneration of sacred relics.

Curiously also, the masses who were excited about the Buddhist Commission's findings and about prohibition before the elections were singularly lukewarm on these issues after the M. E. P. came into power. Not many are disturbed that the M. E. P. leaders have gone back on the promises they made in respect of these documents. Not many are

bothered that the gods have been forgotten once the river has been crossed.

Obviously then these were agitational points against the U. N. P. Every dynamic political movement needs dramatic issues to carry itself into power. The demands of the Buddhist Commission, the concern for a purer traditional way of living, all these were useful whips with which to flog the westernised cocktail party giving, unbuddhistic seeming, westernised strata.

The demand that Sinhalese be made the official language was of course the natural request that a people be governed in the language they best understand and is used by the majority. At the same time it had a deeper sociological meaning. It implied that the Sinhalese strata would profit with more jobs for itself once the change-over was effected.

The replacement of a westernised bourgeoisie by an indigenous bourgeoisie and petit-bourgeoisie is not a phenomenon peculiar to Ceylon. It is part of a world-wide movement and the delayed consequence of the colonial powers breaking up the old feudal societies of Asia.

It has happened in the Middle East; in Egypt, for instance, where King Farouk and his "Turkish-oriented" pashas were thrown out by Nasser and his revolutionaries. It has happened in Syria where landowners with a foreign outlook were removed from office.

The difference between the Middle East and Ceylon is that in the Middle East the M. E. P. wears army boots.

THE M.E.P. RIGHT-WING

THE defeat of the U.N. P. was deliriously hailed as marking the end of a regime of reactionaries who had often denied even the barest measures of social justice to the peoples. Its overthrow was also joyfully acclaimed as the beginning of a new period of economic growth, and buoyant prosperity. In their enthusiasm over the prospect that their pent up hopes and deferred expectations could be realised the peoples were willing to work harder and even make those initial sacrifices which are needed when an underdeveloped economy has to raise itself from the level of bleak subsistence.

Alas for those high aspirations! It did not take the people long to be thrown back into that despondency in which they had long resided and to see their hopes of a bright and prosperous future rapidly receding.

There were no doubt a few redeeming patches. It was, for instance, no longer necessary to look over one's shoulder for the spy who might be listening in to one's conversation to report it to his U. N. P. bosses. The blanket of repression had been removed and workers were free to agitate for their grievances.

But the Government itself is lacking in that energetic initiative which could provide more jobs for our people and raise their depressingly low standards of living.

It was not long before the questions began to be asked: why is the Right-wing of the M. E. P. lethargic? why have these Ministers conspicuously failed to meet the challenges of our economy? why have they not been able to reduce the incidence of unemployment? why did Stanley de Zoysa, the Minister for Finance, produce two insipid budgets, which could not stimulate our economy into greater productivity? why did he reveal the flatulence of his thinking with a bathetic parody in his second budget of the dreary slogan that government should be of the people, by the people, for the people? Why was it that while the Left-wing of the M.E.P., led by the Minister for Agriculture, Philip Gunewardena, could turn up a radical Paddy Bill and show the dynamic restlessness

of a man full of ideas, the Right-wing has squatted down in indolence? how was it that the left-winger, William de Silva, as Minister for Industries could lay the foundations of industrial development but a right-winger would only prattle of socialism.

To answer these questions one must consider the divisions of our society, for, the ideas of men are conditioned and fashioned by the social group which they have inherited and by the interests and requirements of their class. The desire to stimulate progress as much as the desire to obstruct progress are the outcome of the needs of the class to which a man belongs. Self-interest is the fundamental impulse of man's political actions. History abounds with examples of how this driving force has operated. The French Revolution emphasised the virtues, of liberty, equality and fraternity. These concepts were needed by the emerging bourgeoisie of France to destroy the power of the feudal groups who were inhibiting their growth. It did not take the French bourgeoisie long to circumscribe the liberty, equality and fraternity they had pressed for themselves when it appeared that these concepts could be used to imperil the privileges they had acquired.

The British owner of factories in the nineteenth century encouraged temperance because sober workmen could be depended upon to increase his profits.

Society in Ceylon may be broadly classified as urban and rural but there are more significant divisions within these two classifications.

There is in urban society a numerically small but economically powerful group of rubber, coconut and tea-estate owners, of rich doctors and lawyers and top civil servants (who are also owners of estates), and businessmen engaged in the export trade. Then there is a middle class of English-speaking intelligentsia—of clerks, of teachers and minor executives. Next there are Sinhalese- or Tamil-speaking industrial workers—skilled workers in the engineering trade, semi-skilled workers and packers in the tea, rubber and coconut industries and manual labourers like dockers.

In the rural sector there is first the big landowner, especially in the south, whose possessions are in tea, citronella, rubber, cinnamon and coconut. He is distinguished from the town estate owner in that he speaks Sinhalese and keeps to eastern

habits and customs. This section also include the Sinhalese businessmen who run wholesale stores in the up-country estate areas, those who are forwarding agents and the owners of paddy mills and citronella crushers. This section of rural society generally supported the U. N. P. as did the urban landowning and mercantile class.

Next to them there is in the rural sector a petit-bourgeoisie of small landowners who usually let their lands out on ande-cultivation, small traders running boutiques from which they advance money on exorbitant interest to the peasant cultivator. They sell him provisions on credit too. In return for these they get from the impoverished peasant his produce at fantastically low prices. This trader is one reason why the peasant can seldom raise his living standards. He is chronically in debt to the trader and cannot break through the vicious circle of debt and the low selling price of his produce. They are the middlemen of our society who have interposed themselves between the peasant cultivator and the consumer, between the cultivator and the market.

There is also a rural intelligentsia—of teachers, of clerks who work in the village boutique or the village committee office, of Ayurvedic physicians, of Buddhist monks and notaries.

It would not be correct to regard these divisions as rigid. One group merges into another or a man can belong to more than one group. For example, a teacher could also be a money-lender and small-holder; and the notary is almost invariably the owner of property.

The M. E. P. was an assorted collection of sundry social and economic groups. It was a coalition of resentments against the U. N. P.

Its primary driving force was the Sinhalese intelligentsia, but it also attracted to it some of the small landowners and traders who were caught up in the emotional wave of giving a primary place to the Sinhalese language. They wanted to topple the westernised class because the latter made them feel they were a socially inferior class of rustics. Even the most insignificant bureaucrat whom the Sinhalese oriented landowner and trader met in a Government office would treat them with arrogance and condescension. The M. E. P.

offered them a means of working off their resentments and establishing their own social status.

It would however be incorrect to presume that as a class this group voted for the M. E. P. It is possible that the considerable vote the U. N. P. received all over the Island did include voters from the strata of rural landowners and traders too. Sometimes the M. E. P. candidate—from the S. L. F. P. sector—opposed the U. N. P. not because of ideological differences with the U. N. P. Manifestos and programmes are of little consequence to the Right-wing politician and in any case the M. E. P. manifesto was only a collection of social and economic platitudes and if it did make several genuflections towards socialism it was by no means because all who subscribed to it were socialists but because in our period even the reactionary has to call himself a socialist with some such prefix as "efficient" or "Liberal". Capitalism in the second half of the twentieth century is a political dirty word.

Fairly often the Right-wing opponent of the U.N. P. campaigned as an S. L. F. P. man because he could not get U.N.P. nomination. The U. N. P. overlooked his claim in favour of a big landowner from Colombo whose property was located in the constituency he was contesting. The U. N. P. was the rich outsider; the S. L. F. P. candidate, often landowner, resided in the constituency itself. This was noticeable in Matugama where the U. N. P. nominee was a landowner who resided outside the constituency and who lost because, for one reason, he was looked upon as the outsider.

Then the Right-wing of the M. E. P. also included several whose proper place was with the U. N. P. but who had quarrelled with the U.N. P.'s leadership or had been victims of the U. N. P's cynical manipulation of the public services.

Many of the right-wingers of the M. E. P. in parliament are drawn from these groups or owe their seats to the influence of the small landowner and trader.

The critical problems of our economy are those of finding jobs for the unemployed, of expanding the economy in order to raise living standards. Neither this expansion nor the new jobs may be found in agriculture. More than one mission of experts from abroad have reported that some

measure of industrialisation is necessary. But if industries are to thrive it would be necessary to find markets within the country for the goods turned out in the new factories. This means that the purchasing power of the people must be raised and since the peasants are the bulk of our population, it means we need a prosperous peasantry.

That is the simple logic of our economic problem. This is the first step which has to be taken for building Ceylon's prosperity. If the peasant's standards are to be raised it is necessary that he should be rid of all those causes and factors which frustrate greater production. It is most vital that the parasitic middleman who appropriates the better part of the wealth the peasant produces should be eliminated. Briefly, then, the policies, that have to be framed must aim at eliminating the middleman. And that is why the Right-wing of the M. E. P. is dragging its feet when it comes to devising schemes for economic development. For it is futile to expect any class to commit suicide.

This is a danger that in its desperate desire to appease the demand for jobs and at the same time keep its privileges intact the right wing may resort to communal politics. It may attempt to push out one community and give the vacancies consequently created to others—to solve the problems of one group at the expense of another.

Classes which are reluctant to give up their rights seldom confess to the real reasons why they oppose progressive legislation. The technique of oppostion today may often be disguised by an apprehensive concern for democratic liberty and the rights of the individual which have to be protected against what is denounced as a totalitarian threat. Democratic liberty and the rights of the individual in the mouths of the M. E. P. Right-wing can sometimes mean the obstinate right to exploit the peasantry.

The extraordinary fact about the M. E. P. is that the major part of the coalition, the S. L. F. P., is far behind its leader, Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, ideologically and intellectually. Mr. Bandaranaike says he has a close understanding of the direction which politics in Asia is taking, He has identified its goal as a vaguely sensed socialism. Mr. Bandaranaike has a prescient sense of the inevitability of socialism and has indicated he would not like to obstruct its progress but would

prefer to assist its arrival peacefully. He recognises that the urge among the masses to social equality and untramelled economic opportunity may not be denied and that in the process of reaching to socialism certain privileges must be curtailed.

His party, on the other hand, is haunted by Mr. Bandaranaike's past. It was initially organised around the lower middle strata of Sinhalese speaking professional groups like the notary and the Ayurvedic physician and of the small businessman. They were essentially conservative. They were attracted to Mr. Bandaranaike by the aggressively anti-Indian policy he formerly advocated and by his virulent communal speeches which made him appear to be the saviour of the Sinhalese peoples. In the villages the most powerful trading rival of the small trader is the Indian boutique-keeper. Anti-Indian policies accordingly appeal to the Sinhalese businessman.

This is a vacillating class. When the U. N. P. was firmly in power the class of people from whom the Right-wing of the M. E. P. was formed moved over to support that party because they thought it was their best hope against Marxism and the threat to their property.

Now that this group has been able to wipe out the feeling of social inferiority under which it laboured before 1956 it may even seek allies with the U. N. P. in order to arrest measures of social justice which whittle down their possessions and privileges.

An excellent example of how the conservative Right-wing of the M. E. P. was ready to ally itself even with British imperialism was given shortly after the M. E. P. victory—this inclination was revealed although the Right-wing had earlier talked of national freedom.

When the question of taking over the British bases of Trincomalee and Katunayake was proposed an extraordinary letter appeared in the newspapers over the signature of the late Mr. D. C. Wijewardene, author of the "Revolt in the Temple" which had denounced British rule in Ceylon.

Mr. Wijewardene proposed that the British be allowed to use the bases. His purpose was clear. They could be depended upon to help the local bourgeoisie in times of social unrest.

Further the U. N. P. Senator Edmund Cooray revealed recently how close are the affinities between the U. N. P. and the M. E. P. Right-wing when it comes to protecting property. In his speech on the Paddy Bill Senator Cooray remarked that the U. N. P. position was more or less identical with that taken up by the majority of the Cabinet and the 30 odd members who had gone in deputation to protest against the Paddy Bill. He also said the arguments the U. N. P. would like to make had been best put by the group from the M. E. P.

So long as the problem was that of wresting power from the westernised big landowners and businessmen who lived in Colombo the rural landowners and the traders would join with the progressive strata of the rural areas.

The national revolution has been completed in Ceylon. We have begun the second stage of the Asian revolution—the struggle for social justice.

Since this struggle means that the powers and prestige of the rural bourgeoisie will be threatened the opposition of this group will be shown to progressive legislation. The U. N.P. failed to undertake economic development. So will the M. E. P. Right-wing. Both know what has to be done—the facts are so obvious. But the M. E. P. Right-wing will be as lethargic as the U. N. P. was because progress and social reform are not possible except at their expense.

The conflict in the Cabinet between Mr. Philip Gunewardena and the Right-wing, therefore, is not a personal row: not a private fight arising out of the aggressive provocative personality of the Food Minister. On the contrary it reveals the more fundamental clash between those who want to introduce progressive legislation and those who fear social change.

This is a fight which the Prime Minister cannot stop by asking both sides to behave decorously. The conflict is at the roots of our society. It is inevitable. It is unavoidable. It will occupy the next few years of our politics.

LEFT-WING POLITICS IN CEYLON

When the sapient Sir Baron Jayatilaka was once annoyed by the rasping voice of Mr. Philip Gunewardena and the nagging tones of Dr. N. M. Perera, he is reported to have remarked : "For this we have to blame the University College and the Civil Service Commissioners". If Sir Baron did utter this, it was a most percipient observation. For Left-wing politicians in Ceylon—both of the Sama Samaj Party and the Communist Party—are the boisterous sons of University education and the failure of the Government to give jobs to the English educated young men.

English education initially was limited to the sons of the well-to-do owners of coconut and rubber estates. As it spread during the second decade of the twentieth century the benefits of university education reached down to the children of the less wealthy: to the sons of those who had employment in the public services but had little land to support their large families. These students had to depend almost entirely on their education to maintain themselves in later life.

At the time they matured professions like the law were becoming crowded. The policies of the British colonial government, concerned primarily with the needs of the British tea industry, were not bothered about finding jobs for the young men from the University. There were only a few posts available in the Civil Service which unlike now was almost exclusively limited in its functions to maintaining law and order and gathering revenue through the Kachcheries.

In addition, when these young men were about to leave the University the country was plunged into the great depression which began in the late twenties and continued almost right up to 1938. Falling prices in tea, rubber and coconut and the general shortage of money forced the government further to restrict recruitment to the public services.

Some of these young men went abroad for higher studies. When they reached England they came into a period of industrial unrest—of great strikes, and of vast unemployment, both brought on by the depression.

It was the period of a militant labour movement and of vigorous radical politics. Many of the Ceylonese students joined London University, and some of them, like Dr. N. M. Perera, came under the influence of Professor Harold Laski and his semi-Marxist ideology. It was also a period of fanatical Marxist activity. Communism was a popular creed among the undergraduates of English universities. They, too, were in a mood of revolt because the existing social order could not provide them with jobs. They, too, were the victims of the depression.

It was therefore quite natural that Marxist theories caught on with the young Ceylonese abroad. If one examines the names of the leaders of Ceylon's Marxist parties one will find that they were almost all of them in England in the years ranging from the middle of the twenties to the end of the thirties. Leslie Gunewardena, N. M. Perera, William de Silva, T. B. Subasinghe, Pieter Keuneman and Dr. S. A. Wickremasinghe were vitally influenced by the radical movement in England. These years were also intellectually stimulating. There were causes which could command a young man's fervid allegiance and excite his unbridled enthusiasm. It was the time of the Spanish Civil War when Fascist reaction was doing a dress rehearsal in Barcelona and other towns of the techniques to be tried out in the Second World War. It was the years of aggressive Fascism and every democrat was desperately but determinedly fighting to check its progress, whether he was organised in the Popular Front or in one or the other of the many splinter Marxist parties.

There were other stimulants to the spirit of revolt. This was the time when great literary works of social protest were emerging. Dos Passos was exposing the brutal manoeuvrings of big business and the men who made the uneasy peace after the First World War. Steinbeck was writing of squalid poverty within the United States, Bernard Shaw was laughing at the pretensions of the complacent bourgeoisie and the socially respectable.

These were the intellectual inducements to make the young man in revolt against the economic frustrations he experienced feel he was fighting not only to eliminate his own disabilities but also to make the world a better place to live for all humanity.

The Ceylonese who went over to England had packed in his intellectual suitcase some part of the feelings inspired in him by the Indian national movement against British imperialism. He too was against imperialism because it was the British who were denying him job opportunities.

The roots of the Sama Samajist movement and of the Communist party lay, therefore, in the difficulties which the English-speaking, English-educated intelligentsia had to endure.

It is a curious fact that up to about 1940 almost every student who joined the University patronised either the Sama Samaj party or the Communist party. Any student of average intelligence, unless he was a bookworm, was anti-imperialist, and left-wing in his politics.

Shortly after the end of the Second World War as the number of social services the government provided increased and new opportunities for employment like the D. R. O. service and the cadre of Assistant Commissioners of Labour, and Bank jobs were made available to Ceylonese the enthusiasm for left-wing politics subsided in the University.

But the Left-wing movement continues to be dominated by the class which brought it to Ceylon and rooted as it is in the needs of the English-speaking intelligentsia it suffers from the weaknesses of that class. It is highly theoretical, fond of interminable argument and its urban leadership lacks intimate contact with the masses who reside in the rural areas.

The Marxist leadership in Ceylon has been predominantly drawn from a vanishing class—the English-educated intelligentsia.

In breaking away from the urban Marxist parties and by joining the M. E. P. Mr. Philip Gunewardena has associated himself with the aspirations of the rural intelligentsia and the masses. Mr. Gunewardena has explained that a Marxist movement cannot make headway in Ceylon if it does not move along with the main currents of the national movement.

Partly because the Sinhalese intelligentsia was late in emerging into the field of national politics it has not worked out its own political organisation; nor has it evolved a coherent political ideology out of its vague feeling for social equality and economic opportunity.

The interesting question in Ceylon politics today is whether it will be Mr. Philip Gunewardena who will give the leadership to this group and whether it is he who will provide them the political organisation. Will he be the man who will translate Marxism into Swabhasa ?

However, since the M. E. P. is not a socialist party and since it permits our social and economic order to be based on private property and private enterprise it cannot eliminate the conflicts inherent in such a system between the owners of the means of production and the workers.

In this circumstance may lie the best opportunity for the L. S. S. P. to increase its strength. The Communist party whose political slogan is: "Workers of the world unite—to defend the Soviet Union" is limited by the alliance it has with the M. E. P. It cannot aggressively fight to eliminate discontents for fear of toppling a Government which maintains friendly relations with the Soviet bloc. Nor can Philip Gunewardena's faction in the M. E. P. espouse too vigorously the grievances of the people if to do so threatens the tenuous unity of the coalition. This indicates that social grievances will be gathered around the L. S. S. P.

Nevertheless there is a qualification to this statement, which makes a dangerous excursion into political prophecy. The Sinhalese skilled and semi-skilled worker is not the urban proletariat of classical Marxist literature. He has his roots in the village.

Sometimes he is the owner of a little block of land. Sometimes he is a small-scale money lender. Frequently he is a temple "dayaka." All these emphasise the conservative strains: those trends which keep him zig-zagging between the extreme left and a liberal group.

Whether he will go along with the L. S. S. P. would depend on how little the Right-wing of the M. E. P. may be induced to yield. If the M. E. P. can force its right-wingers to make concessions to satisfy the aspirations of the masses then the strength of the L. S. S. P. may not increase much beyond the hold it now has on harbour labourers—the nearest we have to a proletariat—and on the plantation workers.

CEYLON'S FOREIGN POLICY

A persistent criticism which the U. N. P. makes of the M. E. P. is that Mr. Bandaranaike's party has allowed the cadjan curtain they set up between the peoples of Ceylon and those in the Soviet bloc to be breached. This country's freedom, Mr. Dudley Senanayake warns, is being sold to the Communist countries.

Actually, as a matter of fact, as Mr. D. S. Senanayake would have remarked, these contacts, trade as well as cultural, and the establishment of Communist embassies in Ceylon are in the best interests of Ceylonese owners of tea, rubber and coconut. They have helped to eliminate the excessive dependence so far of this country on a limited groud of Western markets. They have also given greater manoeuvrability to Ceylon in selling its products, besides freeing it from political dictation by any one group.

As a matter of fact, Mr. D. S. Senanayake discreetly encouraged Ceylonese businessmen to sell rubber to Communist China even though there was a United Nations embargo on such trade. And it was during the brief interlude of Mr. Dudley Senanayake that the rubber for rice pact with China was first negotiated in spite of the vigorous opposition to it from within the Cabinet.

A country's foreign policy is determined primarily by its national interest. National interest is often defined in terms of the special economic and social needs of the ruling political group. National interest also means the security of a country and that is determined in terms of its geographical location, what big countries are its neighbours, the conflict of interests between it and the big country and the fears or degree of friendliness which traditional relations between it and the big neighbour may have created. Very often a country may decide to keep another at arm's length if friendly relations with a foreign country may strengthen the position within the country of groups which are threatening to oust the ruling party. Nor can the rulers ignore in their foreign relations the temper of their own peoples since the first essential for a political group is that it must survive . It will

not be prudent totally to defy the emotions of the voters. Thus, in the present time, it would not be possible for any government in Ceylon openly to support an imperialist power against an Asian country. The people will not stand for it.

These are some of the factors which decide a country's foreign policy. In the ten years since independence they have shaped our relations with the world outside in varying degree.

When Ceylon achieved its independence in 1948 its leaders had had very little experience in foreign relations. Defence, finance and external affairs had up to then been the concern of the colonial government. Mr. D. S. Senanayake was content to let the position prevail in independent Ceylon which had been envisaged for it by the Soulbury Constitution an instrument devised for a semi-colonial country. He thought it was safe to let the British do the thinking for us on foreign policy. Circumstances and especially the pressure of progressive forces within his own Cabinet forced him at times to think out independent lines of action for Ceylon. But by and large it was the Commonwealth framework within which Mr. Senanayake and his U. N. P. successors functioned.

For one thing, Mr. D. S. Senanayake was too busy consolidating his party's strength and the independence which had been newly granted and he had not the time, even if he had any inclination to do so, to set the world at rights.

Tradition endeared the Commonwealth link for Mr. D. S. Senanayake and the two U.N.P. Premiers who followed him. The passage to freedom had not been marked by any storms with Britain. In addition there were emotional attachments to the Commonwealth for the small group of urban land and mine-owning English educated class which counted most in the shaping of our foreign policy. This group was brought up on English books, on the social and political ideals of democratic liberties which inspired many of the books they had read. They shared the ideals of the English as expressed in their literature. Moreover among this group there was a strong respect for English institutions and the integrity of the better type of Englishman.

The Commonwealth, or more precisely the connection with Britain, revealed itself in the decision to grant Britain bases within Ceylon.

Here again, self interest had a share in inducing Mr. D. S. Senanayake and the U. N. P. Governments to allow Britain the use of Trincomalee and Katunayake.

Mr. D. S. Senanayake resisted very strongly any moves to get the British forces out of Colombo. To his mind, sensitive as it was to the social unrest and the growing strength of the Left-wing in Ceylon politics, it appeared that the British troops could be depended upon to put down any left uprising.

A practical demonstration of this hope he had was given during the clerks strike of May 1947. Although it was in the colonial days Mr. D. S. Senanayake persuaded the British authorities to land British troops from a troopship passing through Colombo. They did a route march through the streets of Colombo in what was unquestionably interpreted then to be a show of force. His closest political associates say Mr. D. S. Senanayake would not have hesitated to have called upon the British to help him resist the challenge to his authority which the Marxists mounted.

A lively nervousness about Communism in Ceylon fashioned Mr. D. S. Senanayake's foreign policy and that same consideration forced both his son Dudley Senanayake and his nephew Sir John to keep aloof from the Communist bloc.

Even in trifling matters this fear of communism would emerge with Mr. D. S. Senanayake.

During Ceylon's independence celebrations in the first flush of enthusiasm Mr. D. S. Senanayake decided to invite foreign powers and he included among them the Russians and Chinese. In keeping with the traditional courtesies of communications to foreign powers his Foreign Ministry attached to these invitations the conventional phrases of friendship. Both Russia and China responded with similar polite phrases. But in a subsequent letter the Russians wanted to know whether this sphere of friendship could not be widened and taken beyond the independence celebrations. They wanted to know whether it would not be possible to establish permanent diplomatic missions. Mr. D. S. Senanayake did not reply to the Russians.

Instead he rebuked his Foreign Ministry "Enough of your polite gestures and friendly compliments."

In deciding to keep the Communist bloc at arm's length, even if trade relations would be conducted with them the U. N. P regimes thought that the establishment of Red embassies in Ceylon would lead to subversive assistance from the Communist countries to the local Marxists. In addition they feared that the peoples would be contaminated by propaganda about the achievements of the Communist countries in the sphere of social and economic progress.

If Communism was a bogey which haunted the foreign policy of Mr. D. S. Senanayake and the U. N. P. there was another obsession which conditioned their thinking. This was the fear of our close neighbour India. Centuries of invasion from India no doubt would have increased this fear.

At the time Mr. D. S. Senanayake became Prime Minister Sardar Vallabhai Patel the "iron dictator" of India was relentlessly enforcing the unity of India when it was jeopardised by the Princes. The Police action in the Indian States which the Sardar launched strengthened the immemorial fears in this country that a greater, united independent India might venture to swallow up Ceylon. There were fears too of the separatist movements in Dravidian South India which resented the domination of the Hindi north and these separatists might, it was feared, annex the north and east of Tamil speaking Ceylon.

Writings of Congress historians who frequently spoke of the virtues of a federation of India and Ceylon were also interpreted as seductive manifestations of Indian imperialism, and the geopolitical essays of Sardar Panniker who talked of Trincomalee in relation to the strategic problems of India further alarmed Ceylonese opinion.

At the first Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference which he attended Mr. D. S. Senanayake clashed often with Nehru. Of course he was no match in debate with the Indian Prime Minister and Nehru would brush off as easily as one disposes of a fly the contentions of Mr. Senanayake. Mr. Senanayake would take an attitude completely in support of the imperial view and in opposition to Nehru's progressive

contentions. Although Nehru easily showed Mr. Senanayake up in the conference discussions, in the less intellectual atmosphere outside he would warn the British, and especially the Australians in private talks that "that fellow one day would be your biggest danger". Mr. Senanayake strove to make the British, the Australians and the Canadians think that Pakistan and Ceylon were better friends to cultivate than India.

It was Mr. D. S. Senanayake's view, uninhibited by nationalist considerations, that even if the British wanted to quit the bases they held in Ceylon they should be asked to stay. More than once he indicated in private conversations with British military figures "even if you want to go we shall ask you to stay on."

He believed that a small country like Ceylon had to live under the protection of the British.

This view was sometime later brashly expressed by Sir John Kotelawala when he was Prime Minister.

"We respect Pandit Nehru", he told the House of Representatives. "We love him. We accept him as an honourable and honest man who wants to have peace in the world. But suppose he is no more—human beings must die. And if South India goes Communist as it is going now and invades us can we defend ourselves with the 300,000 people we have to fight for us against these South Indians ?

"We must have friends to support us at all times. That being so, I will stand by the Commonwealth and by Britain as long as I can, until they do not want us or insult us."

Mr. D. S. Senanayake also did not think that India would continue as a single unit. It was his belief that India would break up and that the task of ruling it as a single entity was too big even for a man like Nehru.

The strivings of the peoples of Asia and the Middle East to be free of colonial rule did not disturb Mr. D. S. Senanayake. Nor did they agitate the two subsequent U. N. P. governments.

Mr. D. S. Senanayake would often ask "Why should we get involved in these matters?" It is true Mr. D. S. Senanayake hated colonialism in so far as he experienced it in Ceylon

but he was singularly insensitive to the trials of those outside Ceylon under this system.

Partly of course this was because he was uneducated in foreign affairs and he could not draw the parallel his son Dudley drew between anti-colonialists in Africa and those who had opposed the British in Ceylon when he remarked to a British Colonial Secretary who talked to him of the Kenya revolt that his father too was regarded as a Mau Mau, during the 1915 riots in Ceylon.

Mr. D. S. Senanayake was indifferent to the anti-colonial struggle. He did not regard himself as a Messiah of freedom. He had no desire to be like Nehru. He feared that if he got entangled in these disputes which did not immediately concern him he might antagonise his British friends and "get on the wrong side".

Partly also these hesitations were rooted in his own character. In Mr. D. S. Senanayake's household would hang a large size portrait of his father in Mudaliyar's uniform of which he was very proud. Mr. D. S. Senanayake had inherited a part of the mudaliyar mentality which admired the British. Cause for cause if a Britisher were involved he would back the British.

At the same time he had a genuine fear that a young country like Ceylon might attempt too much.

He was evasive when he was questioned on the use which the British were making of their bases in Ceylon to suppress the Malayan guerillas.

He informed the House of Representatives which questioned him about R. A. F. strafing flights to Malaya from Ceylon: "A flight of Beau fighters normally stationed in Ceylon were on a normal flight to Singapore and Hongkong. When in Singapore, they appeared to have been used for action in Malaya. It does not appear to be correct to say they took off from Ceylon airfields to strafe Malayan Communists." On another occasion he confessed that "there are certain airfields in Trincomalee which are used by British planes. There is therefore no sanction necessary for the use of these airfields" (for action against Malayans).

But even Mr. D. S. Senanayake could not resist popular pressure and the insistence of progressive forces within the

Cabinet that Ceylon should not even inadvertently betray the anti-colonial movement of Asia.

He was forced by mounting popular hostility and the pressure of Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike within his Cabinet to vary his attitude of complacent indifference to the Dutch police action against Indonesia.

Within the Cabinet Mr. Bandaranaike argued that the "tail-coat" policy of Mr. D. S. Senanayake might be spat upon by the rest of self-respecting Asia and that it might be said we had sold our soul for the protection the British offered.

In disgust Mr. Senanayake let Mr. Bandaranaike go to New Delhi for the Asian relations conference where he sponsored a motion pressing for independence for Indonesia.

Mr. D. S. Senanayake was also induced to prohibit the Dutch using our harbour and air fields.

At first he resisted this, saying it was none of our business and in any case "we could blame the British and scold them afterwards for allowing the Dutch to use the facilities loaned under the bases arrangement."

Two of Mr. D. S. Senanayake's advisers tried to persuade him to prohibit the Dutch using the facilities in Ceylon. One argued that a country which had just been free could not be a party to any action which sought to restore colonialism in Asia. Mr. D. S. Senanayake was indifferent to his altruistic contentions.

The other and the more subtle adviser stammered his compelling argument: "Sir," he said. "Let us do this before Nehru does this." Mr. Senanayake immediately asked the British to bar the Dutch from facilities in Ceylon. To his surprise Mr. Senanayake found he had "solved a problem for the British" with his request "and had saved them from an embarrassment" because they too were under pressure from popular opinion in Britain not to support the Dutch against Indonesia.

Both Mr. D. S. Senanayake and his successors of the U.N.P. were lukewarm in their support for anti-colonial movements because they thought that they were Communist tainted and would encourage the growth of Communism in Asia.

On the Indonesian issue Mr. D. S. Senanayake told the House of Representatives "We certainly hope that things will be settled in such a way as not to allow any of these Communist ideas to prevail or be established—in short that democracy will be established."

Although the U. N. P. regime did ban the use of our airfields for actions against the Indo-Chinese the same fear of Communism made us hesitate in the support we gave the struggle against French imperialism.

Bandung was an eccentric deviation by Sir John Kotelawala from the policy of detachment from the growing Asian sense of solidarity.

This aberration has to be explained in terms of Sir John's own personal complexes and ambitions and the fact that the Bandung meeting itself had not been envisaged by those who organised the meeting of the five Asian Prime Ministers at which the idea of the wider Afro-Asian conference emerged.

Sir John himself had been toying when he was Minister for Transport with the idea of a meeting of the "South East Asian countries." It is difficult to say whether it was the result of a deep political conviction or whether it came from that impulsive irrepressible spontaneous enthusiasm which so frequently assails him. Whether it was not the result of stimuli from a tour of Burma.

Certainly Sir John did not give a subtle political significance to his idea and he would often flippantly remark he thought that "if the five Prime Ministers got together over a cup of tea the outside world might think they were engaged in a deep political deliberation and they would therefore respect the peoples of Asia more."

Sir John also believed in personal contacts as a way of solving problems and after his tour of Pakistan and India he thought a get-together of Nehru and Mohammed Ali might dissolve all the tensions over Kashmir. In fact it is also reported that when he met Nehru in New Delhi after his visit to Karachi he offered the Indian Prime Minister a naively simple solution to this baffling dispute. So astonished was the Indian Prime Minister that he taught Sir John, according to one source, the A.B.C. of the Kashmir question.

To what extent the idea of the meeting in Colombo of the five Asian Prime Ministers was exclusively Sir John's is another disputable point. How much was it inspired by the Indian High Commissioner in Ceylon, Mr. C. C. Desai, who was an intimate of Sir John?

Competent observers who were at Bandung and Bogor say Nehru would insist so firmly and frequently that the meeting of the five Asian Prime Ministers was Sir John's wonderful idea that one began to suspect whether the seed was not really Nehru's. Certainly it was well-known that Nehru was doing his best to draw Pakistan away from the western alliances and closer to Asia and he hoped the meeting of the five Asian Prime Ministers would assist him.

It was the Indonesian Premier Ali Sastroamidjojo who proposed that a wider conference of twenty-nine Afro-Asian nations be held in Bandung.

At Bandung it was clear Sir John was looking at this historic meeting almost entirely from the point of view of Ceylon politics. He regarded it primarily from the advantages he would gain from it against the local Marxist and the help it would give him in the coming general elections. Any prestige he would get as an Asian leader against Communism would help him in both purposes. He hoped also for western applause for his anti communist stand. Contradictorily, the friendliness with which Chou en Lai treated him at Bandung, he hoped, would take off the sting of Marxist criticism from him.

Certainly Sir John had little knowledge of some of the tensions within Asia. This was especially shown when he offered at a press conference a solution for the Formosa dispute out of a prepared speech. After he had read the text one shrewd correspondent asked him: "Sir John, what about Quemoy and Matsu." At this time both these could have provoked a shooting war between the U.S. and China.

With a characteristic expletive Sir John said "What the—man, that has been settled, no?" The startled press corps shut its note books. The inquisitive correspondent who could not believe the answer he had got repeated his question and got back the same angry phrase and the same incorrect answer. His despatch to his newspaper began "A Prime

Minister who seeks to set the world at right might at least get his facts correct."

An inherent conflict does not exist between the commercial interests of the landowning commercial groups previously represented by the U.N.P. and the friendly relations which Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike has established with the Communist bloc. These relations foster trade between us and the Soviet bloc and this trade is as a matter of deliberate policy being limited to Ceylonese. Even during the U.N.P. regime efforts were made to break the near monopoly of selling Ceylon's products which the British exerted.

There were two techniques adopted to free ourselves from the price dictation which Britain was able to make to us. One was a search for new markets and the other the endeavour to establish in Ceylon an international market just as Singapore has done for its rubber. Most of our goods were resold in Europe by Britain. It was hoped to draw to Ceylon foreign buyers, who patronised the London auctions, of tea, for example.

In the D. S. Senanayake Cabinet, Mr. C. Suntheralingam led the revolt against the British domination of our commerce. Mr. Suntheralingam's policy of floor prices was intended to break the price ring.

As the U.N.P. Commerce Minister, Mr. R. G. Senanayake, constantly fought to keep Ceylon's high grown tea away from the London auctions although Britain bought nearly four fifths of our tea. His aim was to create an international market in Ceylon as Singapore has successfully established for its rubber. But he could not break through the British control and he lacked the support of the European producers.

With his China deal—clinched by the Dudley Senanayake Cabinet—Ceylon found an alternative market and that was the beginning of inquiries for our produce from the Soviet bloc.

The elections of 1956 injected new impulses into our foreign relations. Up to that year under the U.N.P. it was the English educated landowning class which determined foreign policy and this group of conservatives kept to the Commonwealth.

The M.E.P. victory indicated the influence of the Sinhalese and Tamil intelligentsia and the Eastern oriented peoples.

These were more sympathetic to the Chinese relationship and the Asian ties.

China in their view is a progressive country which is successfully tackling the problems which Ceylon has to resolve. Its achievements in social welfare and economic development have impressed the Ceylonese masses.

It is however not an admiration for the Communist way of life which has induced the M.E.P. to have close cultural and political relations with the Communist bloc. On the contrary it should be remembered that a little before the proposed Tamil satyagraha restrictions were imposed on travel abroad which limited the number of those who might go on cultural trips to Russia and China.

Once again shrewd self-interest explains the new intimacy with the Communist bloc. Premier Bandaranaike has more than once remarked that friendly relations with both camps profits Ceylon. He has shown how during the recent floods precisely because of his line of non-attachment to any one group both groups rushed to Ceylon's aid. Experience has shown that those countries which have openly and forthrightly shown where they stand are passed over when economic handouts are made. The Baghdad Pact countries, for example. complain they have been neglected by the U.S. to which they are attached.

The policy of neutrality and friendly relations with all countries has given greater flexibility to Ceylon in its economic and foreign relations. And with increased trade relations we are less dependent on the narrow western markets.

The U.N.P. which was drawn from a small group of landowners did not have a broad support among the masses. It depended on a few influential men to deliver it the support of voters. It was also culturally alien from the masses. In the circumstances it feared popular developments.

On the other hand, the M.E.P. has its roots among a wider strata of the people and in outlook it is closely akin to the masses. It can therefore rely with more confidence on its capacity to use nationalist sentiment to resist Communist infiltration and subversion if that is being done through the Red Embassies. The advantage of having embassies of the communist countries in Ceylon, government sources have

said, is that a direct approach may be made to them at times when pressures are being put on Ceylon by the Western bloc.

In the trade relations which have been established with the Communist group of countries the Minister of Commerce, Mr. R. G. Senanayake, has been very sensitive to the needs of the Ceylonese commercial class. The new trade will be Ceylonised. Indeed a deadlock existed on the Soviet pact because Russia wanted to keep the trade to their own agencies.

It is rarely that the commercial motives behind foreign relations are brazenly revealed. But that did happen when Ceylon decided to go back on its decision to exchange diplomats with Israel because the Arabs protested. This country is sensitive to Arab reactions because the tea which the small holders produce and the low quality teas which are manufactured by Ceylonese are sold in the Arab markets. The Arabs were threatening to refrain from buying goods from Ceylon if we entered into close relations with their implacable enemies, the Jews.

The decision to ask the British to quit their bases in Ceylon was in pursuance of the M.E.P. government's policy of neutrality. So long as these bases existed most Asian countries felt they were being used surreptitiously to foil the movement for Independence in Asia and that they were being exploited to further the aims of the Western bloc against Asians. This made Ceylon suspect in the Asian mind. Moreover with the growth of nuclear warfare the bases were a danger not only to Ceylon but to the security of our Asian neighbours.

Nor was it to be relied that because the British held the bases they would rush to our aid in any dispute with India. Kashmir and the other inter-Commonwealth disputes showed that Britain might use its good offices to maintain friendly relations between the different units of the Commonwealth but it would not hold up a shield to protect us from the initial blows should India choose to attack us.

In the past an undeclared assumption of Ceylon's foreign policy was that the Communist bloc was always wrong. The attitude Ceylon took on Hungary was that judgment should be suspended till all the facts were known.

One consideration which governed this judicial attitude was the fear that an outright condemnation of the Soviet

Union by the uncommitted nations like India and Ceylon would give the western bloc the moral authority for a war of intervention in Hungary. Ceylon is eager to prevent a shooting war and would like instead to enlarge the area of peace.

Although the M.E.P. represents a group more sensitive to colonial struggles than the previous regimes it has not rushed headlong into anti-colonial crusades. It has supported the claim of the peoples of Cyprus for freedom from colonial rule but it prefers this to be achieved by direct negotiation with Britain.

In the Suez dispute too Ceylon was for reconciling Egypt and Britain though it showed it was sternly against the use of force by Britain and France. On the Algerian dispute too it stands for Algerian freedom and a friendly settlement. Sympathy has been given to the Indonesians in the dispute with the Dutch but here again the Ceylon stand is for negotiation.

The Commonwealth link is still firm. Ceylon like India believes that in a world dominated by two giants a third countervailing force like the Commonwealth should not be weakened.

Ideologically our foreign policy is still rooted in the belief in democratic institutions of the western type and in the preservation of the democratic liberties made familiar to us through our historical association with the West.

Printed at The Associated Newspapers of Ceylon, Ltd., Lake House, Colombo, and published by Denzil Peiris at 379, Nawala Road, Rajagiriya—March, 1958