









5TH JULY, 1968.

A BUDDHIST POLITICAL PARTY

In the old days in Europe it was common to fight religious wars. For a hundred years after the Reformation wars between Roman Catholics and Protestants constituted a good deal of European history. Even after the end of the Thirty Years War, which concluded a long series of religious wars and arrived at a modus vivendi between the contending parties, alignments between nations on a religious basis was common. For a long time after that period of bloodshed religious issues used to figure prominently in European politics.

All that is a thing of the past. It has now been realised that religious issues cannot be settled either by war or by legislation. The ideal of modern governments is for government to deal with secular matters leaving religious matters to religious bodies. While this is the ideal, we admit that there are exceptions even now. Moslem countries are theocratic and not democratic, but they are backward. Democracies try to approximate the ideal.

The Christian Democratic parties of West Germany and Italy, though religions in name, are simply anti-Communist parties. They took on their high-sounding names merely to attract all pious people to their ranks. Therefore, it does not at all mean that the Premier of West Germany is in any way different from Harold Wilson or President Johnson in his outlook. He does not spend his time in trying to uphold the Church, while the Social Democrats and others are trying to pull it down.

Here in Ceylon after the late Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike's premiership, religion has played an important part in politics. Both the major political parties are concerned with promoting the interests of Buddhism. Other religions have suffered a good deal because of the attitude of our political parties. But then these parties are concerned with other matters as well: they must appeal to voters belonging to other religions; and they want the goodwill of all people in the country. All this is one thing.

Now comes the news that the Political Committee of the All-Ceylon Buddhist Congress is taking steps to set up a separate Buddhist political party. If this party is to serve any purpose, it will have to use every means in its power to uphold, defend and magnify Buddhist interests in the country and make that its paramount purpose in disregard of all other issues.

If such a party is set up, gets a considerable following and succeeds in its efforts, then it means members of other racial and religious groups in this country have no future here. They must pack up and leave.

However, we trust that there is too much good sense in this country to allow a movement of this sort to grow or succeed. We sincerely trust that the level-headed Buddhist leaders in the country will nip the movement in the bud.

HERE AND THERE

R. G. Senanayake:

Mr. R. G. Senanayake has a position in Ceylon which many will envy. Everything he does gets wide publicity. The amount of newspaper space, the number of headlines devoted to him and the number of cartoons about him are enormous. His lightest word is immediately seized upon; his misgivings about the party he is in and his possible intentions always form subjects of much speculation.

Neither his political status, nor his influence nor his following affords a key to the position he holds. What then are the reasons why his words and ac-

tions attract so much attention? Mr. Senanayake's assets are three in number: his family connections, the frequency of his doubts and his courage—the courage to leave his party. He is the son of an illustrious father and the cousin of two Prime Ministers, Sir John Kotelawala and Mr. Dudley Senanayake. Therefore, what may be considered a fault in others comes to be looked upon as a virtue in him; and when a person like that voices doubts about his own party—and this he does frequently—people become interested; and when they know that his doubts usually issue in action, they know that there is bound to be something sensational coming.

So one party is glad he is leaving the other party; and it is glad to have him for the time being, for the sake of the initial publicity. And the party he has left is also glad, because it knows he will also soon leave the party he has joined. So Mr. R. G. Senanayake is always news.

The De Gaullists in France:

One does not have to approve of all that De Gaulle has been doing to express satisfaction at his recent victory. If after all the riots, the strikes, and the whole-estate burnings that were taking place in France three or four weeks ago, the people of France had voted against De Gaulle, it would have meant not merely the end of any stable government in France but a tremendous threat to all stable governments throughout the world, for those who organised all the recent troubles in France were not people who disapproved of his Common Market Policy or his Pro-German Policy or his recognition of China. They were people out to put an end to government by elected bodies and under established laws. If France had succumbed today, any government might have succumbed tomorrow. Government by rioting students and strikers on the rampage might have been pleasant for those who got their wishes—fill other strikers drove them out—but it would have been unsafe for everyone else.

It is to be hoped that the striking endorsement of stable government in France is an indication of a preference for stable government in general throughout the world. I noticed the other day one of your correspondents observing after a visit to the House of Commons that its place in British politics had become out of date. Government by the House of Commons was arrived at after centuries of effort. If it goes, what is to take its place? We trust it is not the kind of thing that was taking place in France some weeks ago.

The Duke of Edinburgh's Popularity:

An English Newspaper recently ran a poll to find out whom people in Britain would elect as President, if the country were a republic, and found that there was a decisive vote for the Duke of Edinburgh. We hope that, because of this, the Duke has no intention of changing his status. Popularity can be very fickle, when Johnson was elected President of the U. S. A. there was a tremendous landslide in his favour, even a South Sea Island wanted to make him its ruler. Within two years he had acquired so much unpopularity that a Texas said (in October) that if Johnson said that the next month would be November, nobody in Texas would believe him. Elected offices may carry power; but the crest that carries one to power may soon become a trough. A hereditary position may be ornamental; but is more lasting.

Indian Films:

There were recently reports that many back-benchers were going to ask that the import of Indian films be stopped on the ground that the country was losing a lot of foreign exchange, losing a lot of readers on a visit to the South would have gone to quite a few cinemas. What were the films they would have seen as being shown or soon coming? American or British films, no doubt. We wonder if they are imported free of cost, Indian films are also shown; but there are 18 major languages in India. Films in all those languages cannot be imported here; a few Hindi films are imported, but if

LAMBETH CONFERENCE 1968

Some 500 out of the 740 bishops of the world-wide Anglican Communion will be taking part in the tenth Lambeth Conference in Church House, Westminster, and Westminster School, from Saturday, July 27, to Saturday, August 24. These are the dates for the business sessions; the Conference will actually open with a service in Canterbury Cathedral at 3 p. m. on Thursday, July 25, when the Archbishop of Canterbury will preach, and will end with a Sung Eucharist at St. Paul's Cathedral at 10.30 a. m. on Sunday, August 25, when the Metropolitan of India, Pakistan, Burma and Ceylon will preach.

The first Lambeth Conference was held in 1867, and since then they have generally been held every ten years, though they were interrupted by the two world wars. (It is because of the gaps caused by these wars that the present Conference is only the tenth, not the eleventh). All the previous meetings have been held at Lambeth Palace itself, on the invitation of the Archbishop of Canterbury, who presides at the Conference, but they have never been attended by more than 326 bishops. It is because of the larger number attending this year, including all suffragans and all assistant bishops who are doing full-time work, that the greater space available at Church House and Westminster School is needed.

Renewing the Church

The theme of this year's Lambeth Conference is "The Renewal of the Church", and the members will be grouped in three sections, dealing respectively with "The Renewal of the Church in Faith", "The Renewal of the Church in Ministry", and "The Renewal of the Church in Unity". Each of these sections is again divided into a number of sub-committees which will consider particular aspects of the more general problems.

The Conference is not directly concerned with liturgical revision, possibly because so many member-Churches of the Anglican Communion are already engaged in revising their Prayer Book services; but with this exception almost every aspect of the Church's life is covered by the topics included in the Conference agenda. Subjects to be studied by sub-committees include, for example, "The debate about God", "Dialogue with other faiths", "Christian appraisal of the secular society", "International morality", "Laymen in mission, society and ministry", "Voluntary and part-time ministries", "Women and the Priesthood", "Principles of Union", "Intercommunion in a divided Church", "Relations with the Roman Catholic Church" and "Relations with the Eastern Orthodox Churches". The subjects will first be discussed by the sub-committees and sections, and will then go before the plenary sessions of the whole Conference. There will also be time for the discussion in plenary session of subjects which are not on the agenda.

Consultants and observers

Special points about this year's Lambeth Conference are

they are not imported, nobody will miss them. So by Indian films what is meant is Tamil films; and if there is a determined effort to block Indian films, it is an effort to block Tamil films. To call them Tamil films, however, would be communal, so they are called Indian films.

A Change in Opinion:

Many years ago the late Mr. J. C. Amarasingham and the late Mr. J. W. A. Kadirgamar tried to run a crusade in favour of indigenous Christianity. They wanted Indian music and Indian customs introduced into Christian worship. They wanted national festivals to be taken on by the Church and in general an indigenous orientation to be given to our Faith. When they were not laughed at, they were viewed with alarm, if not horror. It is amazing how opinion in the Christian Church, past quite a few centuries, was as voiced by its great leaders and Assemblies, has come round to what was advocated by them more than forty years ago. The big men of that era laughed at those who wanted these changes those living now would tend to laugh at the big men of that

that it is the first to be assisted by theological consultants and the first to be attended by observers from other Churches, including Roman Catholics, Orthodox and Lutherans. Previous Lambeth Conferences have been conducted entirely in private, and though much of this year's work will still be done privately, there is likely to be an ample supply of Conference news to press, radio and television. The final results of the discussions are expected to be made known at a Press Conference at the end of August, and the report will be published a few weeks later.

What can these results be? They cannot entail any alteration of Christian doctrine and they cannot introduce any new rules which all Churches will have to adopt. Lambeth Conferences have always been advisory and only advisory. But the agenda shows that the bishops are going to discuss matters of vital importance to the whole Anglican Communion. Anglicans everywhere will give due weight to any judgments or recommendations made by the whole body of the episcopate after long and careful deliberations.

FROM EDINBURGH TO UPPSALA

The Fourth Assembly of the World Council of Churches is to be held at Uppsala, Sweden, from July 4 to July 20, with the general theme of "Behold, I make all things new". Its aim is to focus the thinking of the world-wide Christian community on the themes which seem most important, and its work will be divided into six sections, dealing respectively with "Catholicism: the Church's unity in a shrinking world"; "Renewal in mission"; "World economic and social development"; "Towards justice and peace in international affairs"; "The worship of God in a secular age"; and "Towards a new style of living". It will be attended by 800 delegates from the 232 member Churches of the World Council of Churches, and observers, fraternal delegates, and advisers and special guests will bring the number of those present up to a total of 2,250. It will thus be the most widely representative meeting in the history of the ecumenical movement.

How has this impressive assembly come into being? The answer to that question will be found in a new history of the ecumenical movement from the time of the great World Missionary Conference at Edinburgh in 1910 up to 1967, written by Dr. A. Marcus Ward, a leading Methodist, under the title, "The Churches Move Together" (Doubleday House Press, 7s 6d). Though the Uppsala agenda is outside the scope of Dr. Ward's survey, he gives brief reviews of the previous assemblies of the World Council of Churches and of the special Faith and Order meetings which have also been held at intervals, and he makes detailed reference to developments in Britain and the opportunities now open to the Church of England for advancing the cause of Christian unity.

"Dramatic reversal"

It is an exciting story which he has to tell, for the twentieth century, as he points out, "has seen a dramatic reversal of the long process of fragmentation of the Christian Church". The reversal began with the Edinburgh Conference of 1910. Until then, Dr. Ward observes, the whole movement was towards separation, but "in our time it has begun to be one of integration. There is a growing consciousness in all communions that if the Church is to be the Church, and to do the proper work of the Church, it must be one, and be seen by the world to be one".

A particularly interesting part of this clear and informative book is concerned with the Church of South India. Dr. Ward was closely involved in the negotiations leading to its establishment, and he considers that most Asian Christians will regard this Church as Asia's greatest contribution to the ecumenical movement.

From Church Information Service, through the kind courtesy of Mr. R. D. Karunaratna,

Letters to the Editor

THE D. C. BILL AND ITS CRITICS

Sir, Your issue of the 23rd of June carried two letters from the pen of Mr. S. Sivasubramaniam and Dr. G. N. R. Nathanael, putting forward various arguments to prove that it was inappropriate to bring up the D. C. Bill now. The arguments may be summed up as follows:

1. The plans for regional government have grown less and less substantial, till the one before us now—the D. C. Bill—is almost like an "empty bottle" (N).
2. It would worsen relations between the various communities (S); it will be a powder keg (N).
3. The "majority of the Press" was against it (S).
4. Support for it from the various communities was not convincing; the majority of Sinhalese and Muslims were against it; the others were silent and the Ceylon Tamils themselves were divided (S).
5. When there had been communal frictions in places like Kalmunai and caste frictions in Jaffna, this was not the time to bring up a measure like this (N).

Sir, when I read these arguments, almost like John Keats' naughty boy who ran away to Scotland, "I stood in my shoes and I wondered and I wondered".

If it is a question of postponement, it is well to realize that, in the words of Dr. Nathanael, the matter has been "haggling fire for 40 years"; that is, it has been postponed for 40 years. And as far as this Government is concerned it has been postponed for three and a half years; for this was one of the things it promised to undertake as soon as it came into power. If it is postponed again now, can either Mr. Sivasubramaniam or Dr. Nathanael guarantee that in the (very unlikely) event of the Bill being brought at a later time, the same or similar arguments will not be brought up against it? Will not the very fact that it was dropped after all this trouble constitute a most damaging argument against it then and effectually prevent the thing being touched at all hereafter?

As for communal friction arising out of the situation, if one means so innocent as this (so innocent as to be called an "empty bottle") is likely to produce communal tension, is it not more likely that a "fuller bottle" will create a far greater tension? Is not the fact that there is so much opposition to such an innocuous measure in itself significant? Does it not mean that opposition can be always counted upon to any concession to the minorities however slight? If friction on the part of the majority is waiting to be produced so easily and on the slightest pretext, are the minorities to be always in a stage of fright?

One reason why Mr. Sivasubramaniam wants the Bill dropped is that "the majority of the Press" is against it. Whether newspapers are for or against anything depends on which newspapers they are. Even in Western countries you do not expect papers of our party to support the measures of another party. In Ceylon politics are largely communal, therefore the interests of communities, support or opposition depends on the communal background of the person who runs the papers concerned. Mr. Sivasubramaniam should remember that except for some shares of a Tamil family in one paper, the daily Press—English, Sinhalese and Tamil—is entirely in the hands of the Sinhalese. Opposition to the Bill need not, therefore, be surprising. However, if Mr. Sivasubramaniam reads the daily papers carefully, he would have found the *Daily News* and the *Times* are for the Bill, as for the *San* what else do you expect from it?

Mr. Sivasubramaniam is also troubled about the reaction of the various communities; other communities are either hostile or indifferent and the Ceylon Tamils are not united. This Bill is supposed to be a concession to the Ceylon Tamil; if the majority of Sinhalese are opposed to it, it is not an argument against the Bill, but an argument against those who refuse concessions to minorities. If some communities are silent, it is because they are not concerned with it. Mr. Sivasubramaniam is troubled that the Federal Party and Tamil Congress do not see eye to eye in the matter. In what matters do they see eye to eye at all? Only in the matters which do not affect the Tamils; and that is because they do not have strong opinions on them and are willing, therefore, to vote with the Government. We know why in matters affecting the Tamils they do not see eye to eye. If the Federal Party is to wait till the Tamil Congress gives support to a Bill sponsored by it, it can never sponsor a Bill, though it has a considerable body of members in Parliament.

Dr. Nathanael says the climate for the Bill is not right because of the communal clash in Kalmunai some months ago and the recent caste troubles in Jaffna. When there are different communities in any place it is always easy to stir up these clashes, that does not mean that things should come to a standstill either in the legislature or elsewhere. The American Congress does not stop all legislation because of the Negro riots. Caste, of course, has prevailed in Jaffna, as in all cultures that have their roots in India; its hold has grown weaker and weaker, but there is no doubt that it still prevails. Of course, there have been troubles recently. But Dr. Nathanael knows who causes and stirs them up; certainly all Colombo newspapers know.

Except for one argument advanced by Dr. Nathanael other arguments are extraneous to the Bill, i.e. not dealing with its merits, but with the reactions of others. In regard to Dr. Nathanael's argument that the Bill is only an "empty bottle", the remedy is to ask for a "fuller bottle". If, however, it is so difficult to get an "empty bottle", does he think it will be easier to get a "fuller bottle"? As for the other arguments it may be said that arguments of this sort can always be raised against any proposal. If we are to wait till all the communities agree, all caste feelings cease and all newspapers are unanimous, we can never do anything.

PRO BONO ETC.

A REPLY

Sir, I thank you for inserting in your issue of 21st June my Appeal on the D. C. Bill, which appeared in the *Times of Ceylon* of 22nd May. Your readers have now seen that your Correspondent's attack on me was based on a wrong premise; while he stated that my Appeal was to drop the Bill—as you see in the last sentence of his first para—I had really appealed "that the D. C. Bill be shelved until the country is in a better frame of mind"; and the last sentence in my Appeal is, "Please put it aside for some time. Give the people time to cool down and think calmly".

It is a tragic thing that your Correspondent wrote as he did, so unkindly, trying to assassinate an old Minister, hiding himself behind a bush, writing anonymously, while mentioning my name several times.

However, on further consideration, I have decided not to comment on his article, but to allow your readers to come to their own conclusions, at their discretion. *I would only say in general, that his way of life, based on Brotherhood and Partnership is the sure and only way for our country to develop, along right lines, and to achieve greatness.* Our land cannot be allowed to be turned into a number of walls, where frogs lived by themselves. Isolation and rivalry for positions of power will result in terrible pain and suffering. Division of our country, as some of our leaders are working hard to bring about, will mean increased poverty, starvation and unemployment to the Tamil community and serious loss to the whole Island in many ways.

In my ministry—of now over fifty years—I have spent more than half this period among

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