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# DUTCH BURGHER UNION OF CEYLON.

## MONTHLY BULLETIN

*Eendracht Maakt Macht.*

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### THE SEQUEL.

We have travelled far since Rotterdam. There was Coventry, then London. While destruction continued to come from the air, the emphasis on other forms grew. The Russians scorched their earth, the Nazis burned and demolished villages and towns. Murder at the front was matched by cruelties behind the lines. With the turning of the tide the urge to destroy became more intense. Peacetime sensibilities and standards fell away. Attacks were not confined to military objectives, and no one cared. Air blows grew stronger and fell thicker. Bombs grew bigger and more beautiful. Europe was scarred with the shells of cities. London endured the Vee weapons.

When the Allies began to close in for the kill, Holland came once more into the news—first Arnhem, then the disastrous breaching of the sea walls and dykes. The climax was reached in the remains of Berlin and an uneasy peace descended on Europe.

In the Far East, more and more men and materials were harnessed to the task of destruction until it was found that a few pounds of uranium could release all the atomic energy required to blast and burn the greater part of a town, leaving a flat waste.

The war has ended. We in Ceylon have touched the outer fringe of it, and no more. It is therefore natural that we should find it hard to resist the feeling that the return to normal is just around the corner.

We have indicated briefly the milestones along the path of destruction through which the world has passed. Remember that for six years the process of smashing the enemy wherever he was, and that includes the occupied countries, continued without let up, growing in intensity all the while.

It is but inevitable that this process should have its sequel, that whole peoples should endure further privations and hardships, go short of food and homes, and suffer, perhaps, more than they did when the fighting was at its height. Let us not forget that. Let us go further and try to do something to alleviate the conditions of a small part of those who are less fortunate than ourselves.

The people of Holland, in whom we have a special interest, need help. In London, a Help Holland Council has been formed. Its purpose is manifest in its title. A branch has been established in Ceylon, and the Union has been invited to co-operate with it in furthering its objects.

The facts are plain. The people of Holland are in distressed circumstances. There is no point in debating side issues. It is fruitless to argue whether in breaching the dykes of Holland the Germans were more ruthless and vicious than the British were in breaching the dams in Germany and in smashing German cities, or the Americans were in dropping atomic bombs on Japanese cities. What has been done has been done, and we are faced with the present. The people of Holland need food, clothing, medical supplies and fuel, above all things. We cannot supply them. But we can provide funds which will help in other ways, notably in the alleviation of individual sufferings and in providing some of the comforts which make life endurable. We have heard of the army of foreign workers in Germany, of Auschwitz, Belsen, Buchenwald and Lublin. In Holland there are many wives whose husbands have disappeared in the frequent man hunts, many children without parents. Conditions are bad enough when we postulate a bread winner for each family. Without breadwinners for a high proportion of families, the conditions become tragic.

We commend the Help Holland Fund to you in the knowledge that its appeal will evoke a generous response from you.

### **Resolutions adopted at a Conference of Delegates from Burgher Associations on Saturday, 15th September, 1945, at the D.B.U. Hall.**

1. Being convinced that it would be regrettable from the point of view of the general interest of the Island, if in order to preserve the right to receive instruction in English (the mother tongue of the Burghers) they were forced to have recourse to particular schools whether private, State-aided or governmental, as this would involve the unwilling segregation in their most impressionable years of the younger members of a community which has always taken an active share in every

sphere and aspect of the country's life, the Burgher community request the government to give a pledge to ensure that Burgher children will receive instruction through the medium of English in schools run by the Government or denominational bodies within the frame work of the national system of education and trusts that the Government will always grant the necessary financial provision for parallel classes whenever required (thus giving effect to the requirement in the recent circular of the Director of Education that the mother tongue of each pupil shall be the medium of instruction in all classes up to Standard V) and that no departure will be made from this requirement on the ground that parallel classes might be uneconomical where the number of pupils in a class is small; and ask that the object desired be made secure by incorporation in the forthcoming Education Ordinance.

2. The Burgher Community disapproves the following resolution passed by the State Council on June 5th, 1945, as although it ostensibly applies to all denominations its practical effect will be discriminatory against Christian schools owing to the comparative smallness of the number of Christian pupils :—

"Denomination schools shall be subject to the following among other conditions: (a) to be recognised, the school shall have at least 30 pupils of the school-going age of the same denomination as the controlling body who reside with their parents within a radius from the school of two miles for boys and one mile for girls and children under eight years of age; (b) to be registered for the grant school shall have at least 30 pupils of school-going age of the same denomination as the controlling body who reside with their parents within a radius from the school of two miles for boys and one mile for girls and children under eight years of age; (c) to continue to receive assistance from public funds the school shall have at least 30 pupils of schoolgoing age of the same denomination as the controlling body who reside with their parents within a radius from the school of two miles for boys and one mile for girls and children under eight years of age."

3. That in view of Section 350 on page 118 of the Report of the Special Committee on Education which recommends that;

"no undue restriction be placed on unaided schools.....and  
"unaided schools..... should have the right to enter  
candidates for school examinations held by the Department,"

the Government do give a pledge that unaided schools have the right to enter candidates for all examinations held by or under the aegis of the Department, so that the candidates from such schools shall have equality of opportunity at such examinations; and ask that the object desired be made secure by incorporation in the forthcoming Education Ordinance.

### Resolutions from the Galle Burgher Association.

1. That a circular letter be sent immediately to the controlling bodies of all English Secondary Schools inquiring whether they intend providing instruction through the medium of English in any of their schools.

2. That the policy of all Associations providing assistance or scholarships for Burgher children, should be to provide scholarships only in those schools which either have already made arrangements for instruction through the medium of English or intend to make such provision in the near future.

3. That this Conference approves of steps being taken for inaugurating a Fund the monies of which will be utilised to provide scholarships in already existing English-medium schools or, if circumstances make it necessary, for the opening of a Private English School, preferably in one of the Provincial Towns.

### QUEEN WILHELMINA BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS, September 1st. 1945.

We reproduce here the President's address:—

Capt. Willinge, Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have gathered here today to celebrate the Birthday Anniversary of Her Majesty Queen Wilhelmina, a good and great Queen who is held with great esteem throughout the world and is beloved by her own Dutch people. Our hearts went out to her early in the war when she was driven from her home and had to take refuge in England. Although saddened and disheartened she never lost heart, or courage or confidence and all through these six long years we heard her voice over the radio rallying her countrymen in particular, and the Allies in general, to fight on till justice and right prevailed. We therefore rejoice that today she is back in her own home and is able to spend her birthday with her loved ones in the usual Dutch way.

Holland was one of the first countries to experience the devastating effect of a real blitz. You will remember that Rotterdam was one of the first towns to be flattened out. By a strange irony of fate Holland was also one of the last countries in Europe to be liberated, and that not without a tremendous toll of life and the ruination of vast areas of fertile country by the wanton destruction by the enemy of the mighty Sea walls and Dykes which were the pride of the Dutch Nation.

When victory at last crowned the efforts of the Allies and Europe was freed, we, in the Dutch Burgher Union with the rest of the World, celebrated Victory Day, but to us and to you Victory without the defeat of Japan was only a partial victory. So we waited anxiously for the final victory and it has come sooner than expected. So today we not only celebrate your Queen's Birthday but also the final liberation of Holland and the Netherlands East Indies. We know that most of you present today have your homes in the Netherlands East Indies and with what joy and eagerness you

await your return. We are not also unmindful that your joy is tinged with a certain amount of anxiety and foreboding for you have not heard from your families for four years and you are naturally anxious to know if all is well. We hope and pray that any anxiety you may have will prove to be unfounded, and that your reunion will be complete in the fullest sense.

In conclusion as this may probably be the last official occasion when you will be with us I wish to say that the members of the Dutch Burgher Union have from the time you set foot on our shores extended to you a hearty welcome to our Club and our homes, and in our own little way have done our best to entertain you and make you feel at home. We appreciate the fact that although further removed we belong to the same family stock as you and after a lapse of some one hundred and fifty years we were happy once again to meet the Dutch people. We endeavour, as you know, to maintain our identity and are proud of the traditions and culture of the Dutch race which is our heritage.

We shall always remember your stay with us and I hope the friendships we have formed will always continue. We are particularly sorry that Admiral Conrad Helfrich is not with us today for he took a deal of interest in us and came here many times. Our best congratulations in his well deserved promotion as a full Admiral and also our best wishes for a happy reunion with his family. I shall thank you to convey to him our best greetings. I wish also to take this opportunity of expressing once again our particular thanks to the following:

- (a) the Officers and men of the "Zuider Kruis" for the Radiogram presented to us.
- (b) the Officers and men of the Netherlands Forces for the beautiful painting of the landing of Admiral Spilbergen in Ceylon.
- (c) Lieut-Commanders Dobbinga and Neiweshuisen for the Dutch concerts arranged, and generally acting as Liaison Officers between us.
- (d) Lieut. Max Krauss and Corporal Bakker for starting a Dutch Class and giving lessons. Particularly to Corporal Bakker who continued teaching to the end.

Now Ladies and Gentlemen, I will ask you to give three hearty cheers to Queen Wilhelmina whose Birthday we celebrate today.

### Letters to the Editor.

#### THE POLICY OF THE UNION.

Dear Sir,

Mr. W. J. A. VanLangenberg's criticisms are always kindly, even when they are based on incorrect data, as they are in this case. His complaints against the Union may be briefly summarised as follows:—

- (a) failure to take steps to prevent "the attempts made recently to destroy Christian education";
- (b) failure to increase physical fitness by the encouragement of Sport;
- (c) failure to foster friendly relations with other communities; and
- (d) failure on the part of the senior members to encourage literary activities.

As regards (a), to allege that the Union has been indifferent to the danger threatening the Community is to ignore the great part played by Mr. G. A. Wille in this matter. True, the Union itself has not taken a prominent part in the controversy, but that is because one of its most valued members, Mr. Wille, is greatly interested in the matter, and knowing how well he is qualified to be the spokesman for the Community, the Union has been content to leave the matter in his capable hands. But that is not to say that the Union itself has taken no action, as Mr. VanLangenberg will see from the issue of the *Bulletin* in which his letter appears.

The allegation of failure to encourage physical fitness is easily disposed of. There has never been any lack of facilities for Sport owing to the large number of already existing Clubs, and it would have been a mistake of the first magnitude to start another communal Club. If the truth must be told, there is a tendency in this country to make too much of a fetish of Sport, to the neglect of higher things. The Union has, however, gone as far as it could by securing the ground for the Tennis Courts and encouraging the Comrades Movement.

To my mind, Mr. VanLangenberg is at his weakest when he speaks of our shewing "little signs of friendliness" with the other communities. Mr. R. G. Anthonisz, at the Inaugural Meeting of the Union held in 1908, gave expression to the following sentiments:—"A union among the Dutch Burghers was not going to disturb any of the existing friendly relations they had with members of other communities. For instance, most of them had friends in the Sinhalese, Tamil, and the English communities. He did not believe that any of them would wish these friendships broken up." Far from breaking up friendships, most of us count our best friends amongst the other Communities, and it is quite a common thing for members of other communities to be present at and take part in our literary gatherings and musical entertainments.

The last criticism is as easy to refute as the others. Far from the senior members "avoiding the literary and ethical group like the plague", it is these very members who have kept the literary flame alive all these years. The very first Literary Committee appointed in 1908 consisted of seniors like Dr. W. G. vanDort, Dr. Andreas Nell, and Mr. Arthur Alvis, and this tradition has been maintained up to the present day. In recent years, members in their sixties, seventies, and eighties have been obliged to undertake the duties of Secretary of the Literary Committee because younger men were not willing to offer their services. Mr. VanLangenberg cannot have forgotten the fact that some years ago the younger members *did* take an active part in the literary work of the Union, but the effort was short-lived.

Finally, Mr. VanLangenberg seems to take Mr. J. A. Martensz to task for his remarks regarding Dancing and Bridge. No one will deny that these have their proper place in the scheme of recreation, but what Mr. Martensz and others who think like him maintain is that there is a tendency to exaggerate the importance of these things, to the detriment of more useful forms of recreation. All the elements necessary

for the development of the youth of the Community are to be found in the present Constitution of the Union. If full use has not been made of them, the blame must be laid on other shoulders than those of the "seniors."

Yours faithfully,  
J. R. TOUSSAINT.

Colombo, 12th September, 1945.

### Meetings for October, 1945.

Genealogical Committee	Monday	8th	6-30 p.m.
Finance	Monday	8th	7-15 p.m.
Education	Tuesday	9th	6-30 p.m.
Social Service	Monday	17th	6-30 p.m.
Entertainment	Monday	15th	7-15 p.m.
General	Tuesday	16th	6-30 p.m.

### Events in October.

Thursday 11th, 7 to 10 p.m. Members' Day.  
Saturday 20th, 9 p.m. to 1 a.m. Dance in aid of Education Fund.  
Saturday 27th, Founder's Day (Special notices will issue).

### Dance in Aid of the Education Fund.

A dance in aid of the above Fund will be held in the Union Hall on Saturday 20th October 1945, from 9 p.m.—1 a.m.

The Red Star Band will play.

Tickets at Rs. 5/- each.

Names of guests should be sent to the Hon. Secretary, D.B.U., Reid Avenue before Thursday the 18th instant.

### Schneider Scholarships.

Attention is invited to the notice in last month's *Bulletin* giving particulars of the scholarships available at St. Thomas' College on the results of the Entrance Examination to be held on the **27th of October 1945.**

It will be noted that all the eight scholarships are not restricted to any particular form. They will be awarded to deserving applicants irrespective of the form to which they seek admission.

Boys already at St. Thomas' College applying for scholarships will be considered on the results of their term tests.

## Sinhalese Prize Examination.

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Parents and candidates are reminded that applications for nomination to sit for this examination must reach the Secretary of the Education Committee not later than the 12th of November 1945.

Full particulars appear in the July issue of the Bulletin.

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### Personal.

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Mr. Ronald de Kretser left for England late in September. He will be away for a few months.

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Married on September 19, 1945 at St. Paul's Church, Kynsey Road, Colombo, Mr. G. W. N. Hepponstall and Miss Lucille Venetia Doreen de Silva Seneviratne of Kurunegala.

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Mr. E. St. C. Rodé has been elected, President of the All-Ceylon Union of Teachers.

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Mr. B. R. Blazé has been appointed Editor of the "Ceylon Teacher".

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### Social Service Collections from 25-8-45 to 24-9-45.

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B. H. Ohlmus Rs. 2, O. H. Ohlmus 2, V. Arndt 2, Mrs. B. C. Kelaart 1, O. E. W. Jansz 4, C. P. Brohier 2. *Per Mrs A. L. B. Ferdinand* :—M. A. 2. Total 2. H. K. de Kretser 5, *Per Miss V. E. vander Straaten* :—Miss P. Oorloff 2, Miss E. Oorloff 4, A. M. Spaar 4, Mrs. Piachaud 4, Mrs. Kalenberg 4, A friend 4, L. L. Hunter 4, Mrs. L. La Brooy 4, Miss E. Kalenberg 4, Mrs. Sansoni 4, Mrs. Ludovici 2, Mr. Misso 2, Dr. Wion 2, Mrs. van Twest 1, Misses Welle, Stainton 4, vander Straaten 1, V. E. vander Straaten 10, Sterk 8, A friend 12, Mrs. Pritchett 4. Total 85. Grand Total 105.