

GUARDIAN



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Euro - communism and the LSSP

What's Felix up to?

Tigers and Vietnam jargon

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Trends

Unquiet flows the Mahaveli

Hundreds of farming families in several NCP villages are refusing to move out of their 'traditional' tilling fields (purana) as the diverted Mahaveli waters approach their areas. They have been promised land elsewhere, and water. They say, they will do without both. In a rare show of opposition to the Mahaveli scheme, SLFP and ULF politicians were seen joining the agitation with known UNP supporters. Among the figures were Mr. Maipipala Senanayake, the former Irrigation Minister, and Dr. Colvin R. de Silva and Vivienne Goonewardena from the LSSP.

Pipe-down

Has there been a propaganda over-kill of the FTZ or is its progress so slow that even the FTZ commissars are getting nervous? Top media men were told recently by a FTZ commissar to play down the publicity.

Moslem interests

Concerned about the effects of proportional representation on Moslem

interests, a group of prominent Moslem politicians, businessmen and professionals met recently to discuss the advisability of forming a United Moslem Party. The idea was dropped with most participants agreeing that the interests of the community would be better served with Moslem participation in all parties, particularly the UNP and SLFP.

Quis custodiet?

When Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike was Prime Minister, somebody had scrawled on a 'Temple Trees' sentry box "We are coming!" SLFP Ministers were not sure whether it was the work of a prankster, the UNP or the JVP. They were even more intrigued by the fact that such slogans could be written near the PM's residence which had four sentries on duty all the time.

Recently, an equally mysterious message was written on the wall of a VIP. Translated freely into English, it read like one of those "intimate" communications that sometimes appear as advertisements. It read "Mathini (Lady), come back. All is forgiven!"

Letters

No picnic

Reggie Siriwardena's article on the 1971 insurrection is sincere, passionate and frank. Perhaps it is too brutally frank for some readers. Let them remember that the repression was no picnic. It was brutal too...

University, Peradeniya.

G.

'Kept press'

When an earlier government tried to muzzle the press of this country "The Hindu" referred to a "kept press." Even today we as readers do not see much difference between the so-called "kept press" and our national press. This is more so when we think of our Sinhala papers. That is why we salute the Lanka Guardian even though it is in English.

Panadura.

V. K. Wijeratne

Pakistan

In order to express "another opinion" you have ruined a first-class inaugural number by publishing a commentary on Pakistan which is ugly and in very bad taste considering that this is a friendly neighbouring country. The Pakistani judges are independent and eminent men. Don't use the pen to defend men found guilty of murder.

Colombo.

M. I. Nizar

Another opinion

First it was for four months and then it became six months, ten months and so on. Now General Zia says he wants another eight months for him to enable the civilian authorities to hold a general election. Is this buffoonery, sir, or trying to fool the people for as long as possible? The whole Islamic world respected Pakistan in the time of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto.

Colombo. Z. A. M. Marrikkar

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Cover Picture: A graphic representation of Sri Lanka's Physical Quality of Life Index. Dotted lines A, B, C show life, literary and death trends in Sri Lanka in that order.

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LETTERS

We thank readers for their good wishes. We regret we are unable to publish all the correspondence received. But shall try to accommodate as many letters as possible in future issues. Keep your letters brief.

Infant prodigy now a problem child

Among SLFP'ers, Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike's current correspondence with the Prime Minister, Mr. R. Premadasa on the authorship of the "draconian" CJC Bill, has become the main talking point. With the SLFP and LSSP-CP leaders slamming each other on May Day platforms and yet speaking hopefully of restoring "unity" F. D. B.'s present move is also a matter of intense speculation in other opposition circles.

Eyebrows were raised when the SLFP paper 'Dinakara' published an item which quoted party leader Mrs. Bandaranaike as saying that Felix had not been suspended or interdicted from the party. In the course of parliamentary cross-talk, Mr. Wijesiri, the SLFP member for Harispattu had suggested that there was a "ban" on FDB's party activities. Now that Felix appears to have drawn blood, the speculation centring round FDB, always a formidable but controversial figure, is even sharper.

What most SLFP'ers find intriguing is FDB's decision to write to the PM disclaiming authorship of the "draconian" CJC bill. (It was important to note that FDB uses 'draconian' within inverted commas). Officials are asked and do give advice all the time. It is the minister however who bears the public and final responsibility.

Besides, FDB was no ordinary minister. He was Mrs. Bandaranaike's multi-purpose man who was *de facto* foreign minister while holding at various times, the portfolios of Justice, Public Administration, Local Government, Home Affairs and Finance. He was so much the SLFP's 'brain' behind the scenes that his critics had little doubt he was the 'evil genius'. After the LSSP ministers were



Felix R. Dias Bandaranaike — it's nerve warfare now

summarily dismissed, Dr. N. M. Perera capped it all by calling him 'Satan'. So Prime Minister Premadasa's reply was predictable. He said, in effect, that FDB was the Justice Minister and must accept responsibility.

Why then did Felix, no mean in-fighter, sail into a debate with his jaw wide open. Was it a wild lurch at getting back into the limelight or was he playing a deeper game? With FDB, one never knows, was the standard answer of the average SLFP'er.

Two 'theories' have gained wide currency:

(a) FDB, one theory holds, is in a state of Depression. Most of the time he keeps to himself, feeling unwanted by a party in which he was so powerful a figure. He goes from church to church, holding inner-cabinet talks only with the divine.

On another day, there are reports of FDB forming a new party. What party? asked a SLFP back-room boy—Dias, Wickrema-

nayake and Fowzie? That sounds, he added caustically, an accountant's or law firm more than a political party.

About the immediate future, FDB likes to quote parables from the Bible, especially about Nebuchadnezzar and his three courtiers who prepared a cauldron of boiling water for his enemies.

(b) The second line of thinking reveals FDB at his devious best, making moves not directed at the government or the public that has easily forgotten him, but at his own party leadership. He is simply not ready to be cast into oblivion without a fight. This correspondence with the PM, now made public, (as he may have anticipated) is in fact nerve-warfare on the SLFP ruling group.

The significance of FDB's move lies in the present uncertainties within the SLFP and the broader political context:

(1) In response to a rank-and-file demand for reorganisation (if not, a purge) an experts' report

was prepared but the report still remains a secret. While R. S. Perera, Ariyadasa etc were pre-election drop-outs, a grey cloud hangs over the future of T. B. Ilangaratne, Badi-ud-din Mahmud, S. K. K. Suriyaratchi etc. And of course FDB. But FDB and TBI are leading a furious fight-back, in different ways.

(2) There is a growing feeling in the SLFP that Opposition ranks must be closed not necessarily the restoration of the United Front, which could be a distant aim, but a 'working understanding with the ULF on specific political issues, and a broad trade union collaboration on economic issues. FDB does not fit into this scheme because he is the arch anti-Left figure in the party. Things are more difficult since the ULF now identifies Mrs. Bandaranaike as the "leader of the rightwing" rather than the displaced FDB. The SLFP will not negotiate on conditions of that kind.

• But FDB's immediate aim seems to be to get himself accepted, return to the fold, and then use his many talents to get back on the centre stage.

Waiting for the re-shuffle

Coming, coming, coming....and now coming shortly. "JR is about to make his big move" say UNP insiders. The date generally favoured is immediately after the Third Amendment next month.

JR did make his first offensive move on May Day but that was on the propaganda front. Yet it was pure JR. Opposition speakers scoffed at the Galle Face Green 'bajau' and A. E. Goonesinghe-style fiesta, circa 1933, and it was the kind of superbly organised show-biz at which the UNP is so adept. Not all the Opposition sneers however could wipe out the public impression of total Opposition disarray so brilliantly projected by the SLBC.

Doubtless it was a cleverly edited version of the main speeches. What a stunning effect it created of Opposition leaders screaming, screeching and scratching each other and young Rohana clowning at Town Hall and enjoying himself over N. M.'s high temperature, and Keuneman's plaintive pleas. So much so that the only speaker who earned the quiet respect of the listener with an address of mellow seriousness and dignity was the little known and young Dinesh Gunawardena. It was also good to see a clumsily over-managed media come to life with a nice touch of inventiveness and vigour.



It was the UNP's first successful offensive action, if only in the publicity department. For the rest, the UNP has been on the defensive these past nine months. The post-election hooliganism and the racial troubles were a diversion, true enough. Once the government settled down to business, its performance has been singularly lifeless, even dismal. Its advance these 9 months has been as ungainly, slow and ponderous as that of a pregnant elephant. "Stuck in the mud" is the instant verdict of most observers.

The basic cause of course is the economic situation and the government's inability to honour the extravagant promises it made.

Credibility has been stretched to breaking point by a government that thinks it can administer a country through newspaper head-

lines. If words could move mountains, divert rivers, build houses, create jobs, and reduce prices the UNP's 300 days has been an epic success. However the lack of practical success has been matched by the conspicuous absence of dynamic and talented personnel.

Not unaware of the growing despondency in the party's own ranks, UNP intellectuals were fond of saying "Wait for February 4th", as if the constitutional structure was what needed change. Then it would be all systems go. All the President's men would be deployed at the strategic points and the administrative engine would burst into whirling life. The press, increasingly given to Madison Avenue gimmickry, wrote of think-tanks and task forces.

And now it is "wait for the Cabinet re-shuffle."

Tigers: search and destroy

The authenticity of the "letter" from the Tamil Liberation Tigers, published in the 'Virakesari' has not been established. It claimed nearly a dozen "political" killings. Whether the next letter will include the murder of Inspector Pathmanathan or not, the police have already made up their minds. The special 'anti-terrorist' unit, it is reported, will go into action in the north very soon. Already a massive manhunt is on.

The latest murder places new strains on the police, the government, the TULF leadership, and finally on Sinhala-Tamil relations and therefore on national unity.

Everywhere in the world, a cop-killing, as the term goes, is a very special challenge to law enforcement agencies. Already police morale is not high. When volunteers for special duty in "anti-terrorist" work were invited, the number was less than half a dozen. *Esprit de corps* makes a poor impression on man's basic instincts.

(To Page 22)

Euro-communism and the LSSP

Q. You have just published in Sinhala and English some excerpts from Santiago Carillo's "Euro-Communism and the State", and you, the LSSP's Secretary at the time, have written a foreword. Since the LSSP has not in the past translated many Marxist classics into Sinhala, it seems obvious that you find some special significance in Senor Carillo's essay. If so, What is the significance?

A. First of all, I should point out that the LSSP has no official position on Euro-communism. Many of us in the party have of course discussed this phenomenon and we are all quite interested in studying it. In the foreword, what I have stated are of course my own views.

The LSSP does not have the resources needed to translate and publish most of the Marxist classics in Sinhala. However it was decided to produce at least some excerpts from Carillo's book, because this book opens a public discussion on some aspects of Marxist thought and practice of particular relevance to the conditions of today, and this is a welcome development.

Marxism is not a closed book. It is a living science. It is for us, the best available method of understanding history, and the best guide to political action. If superior analytical method and approach is found I would be the first to accept it. So I believe would have been the attitude of Marx, too.

Q. There have been many responses to Carillo. How do you view these?

A. I have read two such responses. One an article by B. Andreyev in the 'NEW TIMES' the Soviet publication. I was not greatly impressed. The gist of it was that Euro-communists were raising questions, publicly that objectively served anti-Sovietism. The other commentary is a Yugoslav one published early this year.

Just before the LSSP's annual conference in March the party published in English and Sinhala several excerpts from Santiago Carillo's treatise on "Euro-Communism and the State". Carillo, the secretary of the Spanish C. P., now legal, was re-elected to the post at the party conference last month, and won an enthusiastic vote of confidence for a new 'line' which reportedly renounces Leninism. Mr. Leslie Goonewardene, who wrote the foreword for the LSSP publication, was interviewed by the Editor of the 'Lanka Guardian'.

Q. You are referring to the interview in Politika?

A. I read it in an official publication and it is a comment by Dr. Alexander Grlickov, a high ranking member of the Yugoslav League of Communists. I found it most interesting and broadly speaking I share those views. Every Marxist party must independently decide its political line on the basis of its assessment of international and domestic conditions. That is his view. And I agree.

Q. What about concepts such as the "dictatorship of the proletariat"?

A. I have always considered the phrase 'dictatorship of the proletariat' to denote not a form of government but the class nature of the state. One can equally well describe the situation from a socio-political angle by saying that the working class is the ruling class, or from a socio-economic angle by saying that socialist property relations prevail. While calling Britain a bourgeois democracy, Marxists will at the same time state that what exists there is the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. For, in the ultimate analysis, the state in Britain acts in the interests of the capitalist class. In other words, under the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie it is possible to have many governmental systems that have different constitutional forms, varying from democratic forms to dictatorial forms. This also applies to countries where the dictatorship of the proletariat exists.

However, the masses are not interested in these fine distinctions made by Marxists. But the masses of Western Europe in particular have had experience of dictatorial forms of government and they do not like the word dictatorship. In the circumstances I am not surprised at parties like the Communist Party of France deciding to give up the phrase 'dictatorship of the proletariat'.

Q. To take a practical situation ... supposing the Socialists and Communists, the Left alliance in France, had won a clear victory at the last elections, do you think that a workers' state would have emerged inevitably? Are we not confusing governmental power and state power?

A. Not inevitably...it would have depended on many things...on what they did in office in the way of social and economic transformation, of changing the structure...what forces would have been ordered by such measures and what forces would resist internally...? What would the President do...and the other parties, and vested interests...externally, what would the Americans have done.....?

Q. Would not such a Left Government have to smash the state apparatus and.....?

A. Smash...now that is another question...I would say that what part of the state apparatus it would use, what part it would re-fashion and what part it would dissolve in modern France is a concrete ques-

tion such a Left Government would have to decide in each case.

Q. Anyway, 'Euro-communism' by definition is European isn't it?

A. Not necessarily in a conceptual sense...the Japanese Communists seem to think otherwise.....

Q. But it does seem as if this phenomenon is a product of advanced capitalist countries...even Dr. Grichev puts it that way.....?

A. I don't consider Spain an advanced capitalist country..... there I disagree with Carillo.....

Q. Still, our assumption of relevance requires you to establish some basic connection between an idea that has grown out of European conditions which are specific, and the objective conditions in an ex-colonial underdeveloped country like Sri Lanka... what is the connection?

A. The connection you refer to lies in the Parliamentary system with universal suffrage, extended now to the 18 year olds, too, the multi-party system, and genuine mass acceptance of these institutions as a particular road to socialist development and socialism...The last general election here was an important advance, a healthy advance, in one sense.

Q. In what sense?

A. The masses thought primarily in economic terms...there were other issues, true, but in the mass mind economics was the main motivation and they gave the UNP an overwhelming victory because they feel this economics could be solved by the UNP. Of course they were wrong. And that is the negative side. But Marx, and Hegel before him, taught that progress does not take place in a straight line, but in a zig-zag fashion. The fact is that the economic issue was fundamental, not the charisma of Bandaranaike or Senanayake...personalities did not count.....

Q. You yourself lost by over 10,000 votes.....!

A. That is a fact, though I would have chosen some other examples...! (laughter)...what really matters is

that mass consciousness, political consciousness, is steadily rising... and the masses regard parliament and the multi-party system as effective instruments for the sort of social and economic change they desire...that's a fact of life, and we must take that into account, particularly as Marxists who must grasp objective conditions as they really are, and use their modes of understanding and action accordingly.

Q. In the light of your remarks, especially on the parliamentary institutions and multi-party system, would you care to comment on Allende's experience in Chile?

A. As a matter of fact, I put out a small pamphlet some time ago while still Minister of Transport in the United Front Government, in my name, entitled "Can we get to Socialism this way?" in an effort to draw the principal lessons of the Chilean experience. Today I cannot do better than cite a few quotations from the political resolution of the recently concluded conference of the LSSP, on this subject.

"After the experience of Chile, it would be foolish to lull ourselves into a false sense of security that such things are not possible here", states the resolution, which goes on to add that "It may be unwise to disclose today all the steps that should be taken to guard against such an eventuality. But even today there are two things that can be said straightaway. Firstly, in a situation where the officers give illegal orders contravening the constitution, the duty of the rank and file is to act in such a manner as will defend the constitution. This can re-explain to them. If a political understanding of this nature can be given to each member of the armed forces, the danger of the armed forces being used for a counter revolution like in Chile, can be considerably reduced."

The resolution also proposes "the setting up of armed workers' units to defend the new state against its enemies. Such units, formed under the aegis of the trade unions, can be organised into an armed workers' militia."

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Afghanistan

The Kabul coup

Is Colonel (General?) Khadir a Nasser, a Gaddafi or a Mengistu, or just another Suharto or Ne Win?

In spite of strong clues, both internal and external, the precise nature of the new regime in Afghanistan is still a bit baffling. Immediate recognition of the government came from one superpower, the USSR, and quick acceptance from three key non-aligned states, India, Yugoslavia and Cuba. Though a spokesman for the coup leaders has denied that they are Marxists or Marxist-inclined, Mr. Nur Mohammed Tarakki, the Secretary General of the Communist party, has been installed as the new president.

In traditional geo-strategic thinking Afghanistan has claimed a high importance. Yet the Kabul coup focusses attention on a contemporary phenomenon which has a significance that reaches beyond Afghanistan's borders at the centre of Asia. It is the increasingly active and often intriguing role of the army in Third World nations. And it is not classical Bonapartism although it reveals some of those characteristics.

Frequently subjected to external pressures, many 'new' societies unable to contain their own exploding tensions and struggling to enter the 20th century find a convenient instrument for change in the armed forces. Sometimes this role is consciously chosen. On some occasions the part seems forced upon it, and the role purely transitional.

Not a Third World country but a decrepit colonialism, fascist Portugal rid itself of the incubus of an exhausting and expensive war overseas and of domestic political structures which thwarted

its further development through the direct intervention of a group of radical officers; a group, paradoxically, radicalised by the liberating ideas of the enemy it fought in Africa, the black freedom fighters.

In socially backward countries, the army is quite often the only



Daoud: the few changes were cosmetic

instrument of organised efficiency, a modernising force, in that sense. In the absence of 'traditional elites', it enjoys a disproportionate importance as the most dynamic group in a slowly emerging intelligentsia. Unlike in 'older' societies, its primary function need not be the conventionally ordained duty of protecting the established order and vested interests. Nor is it required to be purely ornamental. It can be catalyst of change, the agent of social transformation.

Land-locked Afghanistan did not open itself to the world outside. And the ruling Mohammadzai clan (Pathan) imposed a cruel, backward, autocratic regime over a people slowly awakening to modern life and ideas. Mohammed Daoud who ousted his brother-in-law and cousin, King Zahir Shah, did introduce a kind of republicanism but the few changes were cosmetic. The character of the new regime will be clearer when we learn more not only of the ideological inclinations of the Military Council but what social forces and interests these officers represent.

The Khyber pass, celebrated in history as in fiction and fable, is the symbol of Afghanistan's strategic importance. Even today, the mountain slopes are littered with huge concrete boulders — a hurried British 'defence' against what they imagined would be the relentless push of German armies across Europe into Central Asia, and Britain's prize possession, India. But in the previous century, the main concern of British imperialism was 'the threat from the north, Czarist Russia.

Modern geo-political changes have enhanced Afghanistan's importance making its future a matter of deep concern to India, Pakistan and Iran, to the Soviet Union, China and the US.

The presence in Kabul of the Secretary-General of Mr. Wali Khan's party and the propaganda put out daily over Kabul radio justified Pakistan's old fear that if Afghanistan was the active patron of Pathan irredentism, Delhi could not help but look kindly upon this exercise.

When the insurgency in Baluchistan erupted a few years ago, Pakistan which had already lost its east wing, felt itself threatened on all sides. Was land-locked Afghanistan aiding both the Pathans (on their demands for Paknotistan) and the Baluchis in order to find an opening to the sea, and the vital Arab (Persian) Gulf? And was Moscow extending an encouraging hand? With an unresolved dispute over Kashmir, Delhi doubtless enjoyed Pakistan's new troubles.

Neighbouring Iran which was helping the Kurdish rebels in Iraq stepped in to patch up the Pakistan-Afghanistan quarrel when Islamabad detected Iraqi arms being sent secretly to the Baluchi insurgents. Wali Khan, jailed by Mr. Bhutto, was released by General Zia, and Mohammed Daoud largely through need for economic aid, had been steadily improving Afghanistan's relations with Iran, Pakistan and Turkey — members

of the R. C. D., and allies of the United States. Daoud also sought aid from Saudi Arabia, another US bastion in the region.

Aware of Moscow's special interest in the security of its small, southern neighbour, the American diplomatic effort has been competitive but quietly so. Both super powers have given arms and development aid to Afghanistan. However Soviet influence, particularly in the armed forces, has been visibly greater — to Peking's immense disappointment.

Afghanistan's pro-western neighbours, Washington and Peking would have reacted to the coup in Kabul with varying degrees of displeasure and disquiet.

Brazil

Insidious ways of cartels

Carter si, cartels no! This might soon become the slogan in Brazil, the most thickly populated country in Latin America, and one of the richest in the Third World. Evidence of how the cartels operate to the detriment of national industry and a developing nation's economic independence came out in the sensational trial of a German author, Mr. Kurt Mirow.

His book "Dictatorship of the Cartels" was banned and the author himself threatened with dire penalties under the national security laws introduced by the military regime. However his appeal to the Supreme Military Tribunal was upheld. Supported by voluminous evidence, Mr. Mirow revealed how the transnationals used the most insidious methods to compel the Brazilian government to grant them special concessions. Exploiting these privileges, the cartels gradually squeezed the national industrialists out of business. Soon they would use the newly acquired stranglehold to

dictate not only economic policies to the national government but even political positions. The giants were specially tenacious and wily in the spheres of steel, textiles, chemicals, electricity, and automobiles. Author Mirow maintained that the Brazilian operation was common to most Third World countries,

The tribunal which described the case as "the most important in recent times" acquitted Mr. Mirow and commended "this warning cry for our economic independence". One of the members of the tribunal, General Octavio added: All over the world the cartels are developing and asphyxiating national companies".

RHODESIA: THE BREAK-DOWN

POPULATION

Africans* 5,220,000

Europeans 249,000

Coloureds** 16,900

Asians 9,300

*Two thirds live in rural areas

**Mixed race



Under Land Tenure Act (1969) division of land is:

	National land	6.0
	European areas	45.0
	Tribal Trust land	39.9
	Purchase area	3.7

• All towns are in European areas
• Much of best agricultural land is European

Philippines

Crackdown by Marcos

The gradual easing of martial law in the Philippines that President Ferdinand Marcos had planned appears to have become exactly the opposite—a major crackdown on his opponents.

Moreover, it raises a key question. Will the controversy over the just-completed national elections in the Philippines complicate negotiations with the United States for renewal of its military base leases there?

Mr. Marcos was quick to accuse the U. S. Central Intelligence Agency of helping the opposition during the election campaign.

Initially, it was expected that Mr. Marcos would drop his charges of American "meddling" once the election was over. But if he continues his criticism of the United States, this could further snag the continuing negotiations over the leases to Clark Air Base and the American naval base at Subic Bay.

With their current concern over human rights, President Carter and Congress may find it even harder now to negotiate and approve new leases (involving substantial amount of American economic and military aid), than before the elections.

The reason is that the current crackdown is the harshest since Mr. Marcos imposed martial law in 1972. The government has filed sedition charges against more than 500 people, ordered a clampdown on free assembly and debate, and warned that he may restore a midnight-to-dawn curfew. He has claimed that "subversives" are planning a full-scale armed offensive against his regime.

(Mr. Marcos had lifted restriction on free assembly and debate during a 45-day campaign period leading up to the election. The curfew was ended last November.)

Foreign journalists rapped

The President also has accused foreign journalists of interfering in

the election, in which the most prominent opposition elements contested only 21 seats—all of them in metropolitan Manila—out of almost 200 up for a vote.

The opposition accuses the government of massive vote-rigging and challenges the President's contention that only his own party's candidates won in Manila. Several foreign correspondents reported witnessing election irregularities. The main charges were that opposition observers were barred from the polls and that no one was allowed to watch the vote counting for up to 12 hours.

The government says it has appointed a commission to investigate these charges.

Although Mr. Marcos's New Society Movement claimed victory in all 21 of the Manila races, official reports showed government support was well below previous votes. Indeed, former Sen. Benigno Aquino, who campaigned for one of the Manila seats from prison, where he is under a sentence of death, claimed a "moral victory" for the opposition and said the loss of support for the government showed the Filipino people finally had "overcome their collective fear."

Demonstration

One sign of dissatisfaction President Marcos must deal with was an election-eve demonstration in Manila in which Filipinos were asked to show their support for Mr. Aquino's People's Power Party by briefly making as much noise as possible. Thousands banged household utensils, shot off fireworks, and honked car horns. Police finally put a stop to the demonstration, arresting more than 20 persons.

One Filipino public opinion specialist says the election gave people a chance to vote against and oppose certain unpopular aspects of martial law without voting against Mr. Marcos himself (who was not up for election). Although many in the Philippines welcome the reduction of crime brought by martial law, there is increasing discontent over alleged corruption and favoritism shown to Marcos associates, especially in the business sector.

Candidate's home raided

With hours after the closing of polls, police raided the home of opposition candidate Charito Planas and said they found one firearm and some subversive documents there. People's Power Party campaign manager Lorenzo Tanada, a former senator, was arrested, along with four opposition candidates. Mr. Marcos ordered the release of more than 500 others who had been arrested for staging a protest march after the elections. However, charges of sedition and illegal assembly will remain against them. Conviction for illegal assembly carries a 6-to-12 year prison sentence. The penalty for sedition is an even stiffer prison term.

Foreign Minister Carlos Romulo has accused journalists from other countries of attending opposition party meetings and actively participating in the planning of the anti-government demonstration. (*Christian Science Monitor*).

Washington

IMF pay strike?

The wise men of the I.M.F. who issue, seasonal recommendations to member countries, especially the helpless, debt-burdened poor, about wage increases are threatening to strike: For higher pay. This Gilbertian situation has arisen after the IMF offered a 3.5 percent salary rise. The IMF staff say that this is less than half the rise in the cost of living.

The management's decision follows criticism by the US Congress that IMF and World Bank staffers are enjoying salaries and perks too high even by US standards.

One thousand top economists and executives met to discuss the offer, and 903 voted against accepting it. If the management does not promise bigger pay packets, they are threatening a strike.

Quaid - e - who?

Though other Malay Street mandarins master-minded the 'media-wise standardisation' move, Dr. Al Haj Badi-ud-din Mahmud was its political author. Ostensibly intended to assist under-privileged rural students, this policy was Buddy's greatest gift to the educationally backward Moslem community of which he was the self-styled leader. Strutting the political arena like a peacock in suits drawn from his well-stocked Brooks Brothers' wardrobe (a legacy from his somewhat controversial New York days when he was one of Prime Minister SWRD Bandaranaike's UN delegates) Buddy in fact styled himself "Quaid-e-millat" (leader of the community), only one notch lower than Quaid-e-Azam Mohammed Ali Jinnah. Hinting sometimes that the SLEP was his brain-child, Buddy gave the impression that Arab aid was not a reward of Sri Lanka's pro-Arab policies but a personal recognition of his leadership of the (now defunct) Islamic Socialist Front.

The 'academic' from Aligarh however was not too wellknown for his intellectual activities. So much so that former Prime Minister, the late Dudley Senanayake said that "Bada-u-din (above the belt) was better known for his bada-yatin" prowess (below the belt).

When the Islamic Secretariat recently called a meeting to discuss Moslem matters, especially the proposed change to proportional representation, Moslems of varying party hues, green, blue and pink, were present. Notable absentee—the Quaid-e-millat! "Buddy", said a fellow Moslem "is an absentee landlord". Not quite. He was the absentee boarding house-keeper, the moving spirit behind a money-spinning hostel close to Gampola Zakira, a school which truly prospered during Buddy's period as Education Minister.



Ernest Corea (second from left) at a performance of tribal dances in London.

On the move

So. That was how Editor Ernest Corea, now assigned to Ottawa as our man there, often began a brief and breezy leader with that single eyebrow raising word, So. Period With such touches he tried to rouse the staid old "Daily News" into looking brighter and cheerier when he was appointed its editor in the middle sixties. Earlier he had an assignment in the Congo as a UN diplomat. The latest appointment makes him the second Sri Lankan journalist to serve his country as an Ambassador.

The first was H. A. J. Hulugalle a longtime D. R. Wijewardene man who was accredited to Rome and concurrently to Israel, but the second half of his assignment never came off partly due to the Suez war and partly to the sensational electoral turnabout in 1956. An excellent raconteur, Hulugalle has this to say about his first trip to Amman. He asked his taxi driver to take him to Thomas Cooks, an organisation enjoying a new lease of life in Colombo under the skilled hands of Wing Commander Noel Fernando. But soon he found himself on the high road and on to the desert which made him remind his driver that his destination was Thomas Cooks. "Of course," said the driver impatiently, "we are going to Damas—cus."

Suspect's all

The White House—the dream house of many an American political aspirant—is now turning into "the house of suspicion" says reviewer Robert Blake and suggests this as the better title for Bob Haldeman's controversial book on the Nixon years, "The Ends of Power".

Blake's suggested title has a good reason. Taping of conversations in the White House was not something Nixon began. Lyndon Johnson practised it, too. But he was a wiser man. He used a toggle switch which automatically cut off the "juicy conversation". Nixon didn't, and his apparatus automatically recorded every word that was uttered in the Oval Office. "For want of a toggle switch," records Haldeman pensively, "the Presidency was lost."

The first thing that Nixon did on moving in was to remove Johnson's recording instruments, but installed his own gadgets later on to catch, according to Haldeman, Henry Kissinger because he was liable to say one thing and do another.

Johnson had the same problem with Bobby Kennedy. But Bobby was cuter and carried with him a pocket radio scrambler which jammed the microphone. Just when Johnson thought that he had caught Bobby Kennedy out at last Johnson was in for his biggest surprise. The tape on Bobby sounded gibberish. Expletives deleted!

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Both cause us sorrow

There is now on a wordy warfare over the foreign jaunts of ministers in both the Sirima Bandaranaike and J.R. Jayewardene governments. As far as we are concerned this verbal duel arouses in us mingled feelings of disgust, amusement and sorrow. Both parties appear to be taking this matter to unnecessary lengths merely to give the impression that the other party is at fault. This is a puerile attempt.

In this context Mrs. Bandaranaike's May Day complaint that the ruling party members are now travelling around in the cars they imported or in petrol consuming helicopters turns out to be a sad lament. The unfulfilled ambitions of Mrs. Bandaranaike and the gratified ambitions of J. R. both cause us sorrow. Both in fact are now a cause of great sorrow to the nation. The destruction of sorrow is the beginning of the path of liberation (vimukthi marga).

China and Dinakara

Taking a dig at China the Dinakara has commented that the press delegation from Sri Lanka has been given a "top level reception." Commenting further it has said "one who has no official status (the reference is to Mr. Esmond Wickremesinghe) is in a team which includes the Secretary to the Minister of Information and Broadcasting and that this has been acceptable to both sides."

The "acceptability" seems surprising to the Dinakara, but not to those familiar with the role of the Chinese leadership in betraying the socialist and liberation movements in the world. The paper seems to have been irked only when China has tried to snuggle close to the reactionary government of Sri Lanka. Internationally China's role

has been one of betrayal hitherto. The latest act was seen when the British Air Chief was on a visit to China and admitted in a joint statement that the common enemy of Britain and China was the Soviet Union.

ජනදීප

Blowing UNP's trumpet

The Janata Vimuktha Peramuna by holding a May Day rally for the first time and by slinging its customary mud at some of the leading leftist leaders of the country have shown how they are fulfilling the requirements of the reactionary UNP. There is no need to recount how this party tried to translate its impatience and political bankruptcy into a revolution in 1971 and thereby strengthened the ranks of the capitalists.

By paving the way for the emergence of the UNP at the last election and thereafter remaining silent in the face of worker oppression and betrayals of the people and raising its voice only to say that now is not the time for revolution, only proves that the 1971 insurrection was aimed at handing over power to the reactionaries.

දිනකර

Strange friends of China

It has been reported that a press delegation representing the UNP media of the country and led by Mr. Esmond Wickremesinghe, winner of the 'Golden Pen', awarded by an international press organisation run by the grace of western imperialists, has been given a top level reception by the Chinese government. A significant

fact is that this delegation is being led by one who has no official standing in a team that includes the Secretary of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and that this arrangement has been acceptable to both sides.

With the press delegation having the approval of President J.R. Jayewardene and thus indicating his "sincere friendship" towards China, Chinese officials would have undoubtedly had to look up the political history of Mr. J.R. Jayewardene. Their task may not have been easy. It was mentioned by Madame Teng Chao, Vice Chairman of the National People's Congress, in her speech of welcome that by being a member of the cabinet which approved the Rubber-Rice Pact, Mr. Jayewardene has helped to strengthen friendship between the two nations. But the people of this country cannot forget the attitude taken by Mr. J. R. Jayewardene's party towards China in international affairs.

வினாக்கள்

Indian journals

We consider that the Sri Lanka Tamil literature is facing a critical time now. This situation has arisen because of the flooding in of magazines and novels from India. Earlier when Sri Lankan Tamil literature suffered on account of the free import of Indian magazines, protesting voices demanded controls. Consequently the last regime controlled to a great extent the import of Indian journals and magazines. But allowing at present the import of Indian magazines without any limitations, we fear, will harm indigenous Tamil literature. We, however, welcome the import of reputed journals. At the same time we abhor the invasion of trash material which debases the taste of the local readers and also retards the development of local Tamil literature.

The other Lee

Liberty is a boisterous sea. Timid men prefer the calm of despotism. What troubles one about the Sri Lanka press is not so much what it says, but rather what it doesn't say. Proverbial Ceylonese hospitality in itself cannot account for the cosmetic job done by the media last month during Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew's visit. There appears to be a conspiracy to uphold the ethics of countries like Singapore and South Korea and to denigrate the fundamentals of our pluralist democracy. An attempt is being made to clothe democracy in a shroud.

The kind of reception that the Sri Lanka press gave Mr. Lee contrasts sharply with what the liberal press in other countries have had to say about him. In fact a few years back when Mr. Lee was in UK to receive an honorary degree, the *Sunday Times* directed a merciless attack against him.

Press in chains

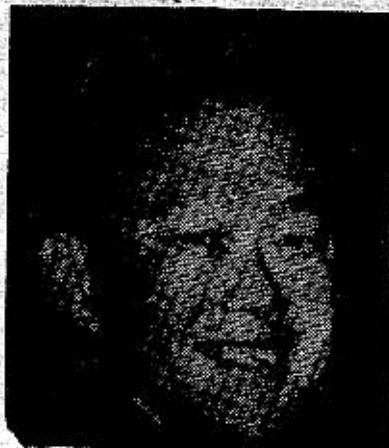
"Singapore has a one-party Parliament, which should enable a Prime Minister to liberate responsible dissent outside. Not at all. Free speech has been virtually extinguished by the well-known device of imprisonment without trial. *The Singapore press is in chains.* Newspapers can only be published on Government licence and Chinese as well as English-language papers have closed. Editors and journalists are now in prison, untried."

"When outside critics, like the International Press Institute or the Press Foundation of Asia or the Commonwealth Press Union, demur at this, Mr. Lee brings his massive dialectical powers to the defence of the proposition that free speech is a danger because his people are incapable of resisting subversion and corruption by the media."

"There is yet another achievement overlooked in the new Doctor of Laws. He abolished the jury system, which had been operative in Singapore since its foundation. From mid-April to December, 1969, when

the law was changed, he silenced the attempt to debate it in Singapore. On his instructions the newspapers were forbidden to publish, when it mattered, the critical resolution of the special meeting of the Bar, and its memorandum."

Closer home, in India, *The Statesman* marked a visit there by Mr. Lee, with a cutting editorial.



Lee Kuan Yew

"It is only by some violence to the word that he can be described as a democrat. He has created a society of soulless conformists. The constitution is supposedly democratic but no party other than the ruling PAP can contest elections without inviting some sort of pressure and intimidation; a 'democracy' which succeeds in ensuring that all the 58 sitting members belong to the ruling party is too perfect to be true."

Repression and fear

Recently *The Nation* in the USA, also expressed anxiety about the way things are going in Singapore. "In the last decade a sophisticated set of press laws, internal security acts, and surveillance apparatus have created in Singapore an atmosphere of repression and fear. The most bizarre crackdown on political dissidents began shortly after last December's parliamentary elections. With complete control over the broadcast and print media and only seven full days of campaigning, Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew's People's Action Party swept every seat. Since then more than a dozen opposition political candida-

tes, lawyers and journalists have been detained.....

"Lee's brand of dictatorship is uniquely disturbing for its technical proficiency. Control of the media is his best political weapon. Lee has close ties to the West, but that does not protect the foreign press from government attack. During his seventeen years in power, foreign correspondents have been repeatedly expelled and their publications banned including reporters from *The New York Times*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, *Petroleum News* and the *New Zealand Press Association*. Lee's current attacks are aimed at weakening the only serious English language news magazine in Asia, the Hong Kong-based *Far Eastern Economic Review*."

The author of these observations is Kai Bird, an American correspondent with many years experience in Asia. He now works for *Newsweek*.

But the most telling indictment of the way Mr. Lee regards political freedom and intellectual liberty (those very values so glibly paraded by the Sri Lanka media) came from Mr. Harold Evans one of the most distinguished editors of the *Western World* today. Last year his newspaper the *Sunday Times* won the largest number of Fleet Street's most coveted awards.

Mr. Evan's wrote: "A good many English liberals, somehow overlooking this appalling record, have been captivated by Mr. Lee's fluency, his intelligence, his manifest stature as an international statesman. He has ably led Singapore through many perils. But for two great British universities to honour him as a Doctor of Laws devalues the degree and dishonours the first principle of university life — that ideas shall be freely exchanged."

Pepping up the bureaucracy

A few practical suggestions

NOTE: In this article I discuss some issues which mainly affect the middle-class citizen. I make no apology for this. Contrary to what many politicians seem to believe, this much despised tax paying beast of burden, too, is worthy of some little consideration—if only for the mercenary reason that he has more clout in forming public opinion than is generally believed.

"We will eliminate the enslavement of the people by the government and its bureaucracy." (UNP manifesto).

Campaign promises are pie-crust and it is only the most naive and credulous that will take them too seriously. All the same a promise such as this is one which would not have failed to strike a responsive chord in many a voter. The insolence of office is always a more intolerable burden for our people than even empty shelves in the shops. This is why our voters have always voted *against* the government. They vote against what King Lear bitterly called the great image of authority. ("Thou hast seen a farmer's dog bark at a beggar? And the creature ran from the cur? There thou might'st behold the great image of authority: a dog's obeyed in office"). Politicians tend to forget this.

To be perfectly fair, the repeal of the CJC Act, the refusal to have routine recourse to emergency rule, the restoration of local bodies' elections etc, have all been measures designed to "eliminate the enslavement of the people". But what of the great bureaucracy itself? It remains unchanged. Mark Twain said: Everybody complains about the weather but no one does anything about it. In Sri Lanka everybody complains about the bureaucrat. The purpose of this article is to try to get something done about him. A few examples of the kind of thing the Ministers never seem to come across at their elevated level but which is the daily bread of our citizen Mr. M. C. will show what I mean.

1 M. C. goes to the CTO to arrange an overseas telephone call. He is required to fill a form in quadruplicate—no kidding. No carbons being provided he must write it out four times. Once he gets through this chore he is told how much to pay as a deposit against the call. He pays and is given a receipt. When in due course the call is over M.C. has not used up the full number of

minutes covered by his deposit and the exchange tells him he is entitled to a refund. Naturally he goes back to the same office where he paid. He is mistaken. Refunds are made in an entirely different building some distance away but it has not occurred to anybody to give M.C. this useful information on his earlier visit. Nor is it mentioned on the receipt given to him. He asks his way and finally gets to the other office. More forms to fill, this time in duplicate. M.C. fills them.

Does he get his money? Not a bit of it! He is asked to call the following day. Presumably various bureaucrats have to put their ink on various bits of paper before he can be paid the Rs. 40/- or whatever enormous sum it is that is due to him. By the time M.C. has finally collected his money he has spent a substantial part of it on taxi fares trying to get it back. That is the way it is done.

Here is the way they could do it if only they wanted to: When M. C.'s overseas call is over, the exchange immediately advises the refund counter of the quantum of refund due to him on his receipt No.....The receipt contains instructions on it where to go for a refund. M. C. produces the receipt at the refund counter and is paid forthwith. But that is too uncomplicated for the bureaucratic mind.

2 If it is difficult for M. C. to get the bureaucrats to part with money that is due to him it is equally difficult to get them to accept money that is due from him to the State. Take for instance M.C.'s end-of-the-year attempts to pay the revenue licence fee due from him on his 20 year old car. In the bad old colonial days the Registrar of Motor Vehicles would, unasked, post the application form to him. Now M. C. has to go and collect it at the RMV's office which is, for M.C.'s convenience, located at Narahenpita. He fills up the form and in addition to his cheque he attaches to the application (i) his registration certificate (ii) his insurance certificate and (iii) his revenue licence for the current year. (Why all these other documents are needed in addition to the application form and the cheque is that the RMV, for his own convenience, is trying to kill several other birds with this one stone. In other words the collection of the tax is made the occasion for checking whether M. C. has insured his car, paid his licence fee for the current year etc.

The simple reason is that to the bureaucratic mind the average citizen is a delinquent who would step out of line but for the eternal vigilance of the bureaucracy. M. C. sends the lot under registered cover to the RMV and waits for several weeks for his licence.

No RMV has yet devised a less time-consuming way of collecting this sum of money due from M. C. annually. Why should not M. C. be able to go to one counter with all his papers, pay his money and depart with his licence in five minutes? For that matter why should he not be able even to send off a cheque to the RMV by post merely quoting the registration number of his vehicle? The only reason is, that the expeditious disposal of the public's business is repugnant to the mind of the bureaucrat.

3 Then there is the mess over radio licensing. The Minister of Information has, we are told, appointed a committee to review the present system of licensing radios. The committee is likely to find that one of the main reasons why people do not buy radio licenses is that the actual payment is such a very difficult operation. For example, M. C. cannot send a cheque to the PMG with a covering letter giving particulars of his set. The PMG will send the cheque right back. M. C. is required to call at the PO and get a piece of paper pasted on his licence card.

Anyone who has called at a P. O. even so much as to buy a stamp knows that it is no picnic. For radio licences you have to stand in line with your card. The cancellation of the revenue label pasted on the card is a leisurely ritual. It is obvious the counter clerk is not on a piece rate. This card, unlike the car licence which has to be affixed to the car's windscreen and so is secure, is an easily misplaced document. M. C. being an average householder puts it away carefully in a 'safe' place and soon forgets exactly where he left it. And if he cannot find it, he cannot pay his licence fee for the next year. So he tends to forget the whole bothersome business altogether.

As a general rule it may be said that the tax that is most likely to be readily paid by the taxpayer is the one he can pay by cheque and send off by post. But the reason for the card is that the PMG wants, when he collects this year's tax, to make sure that M. C. has paid last year's. Is it so very difficult to devise a scheme where the licensing authority knows whether M. C. has paid his licence fee or not, other than by calling upon him to produce his licence?

In other countries it is the premises that are licenced not individual sets. With the proliferation of the portable transistor type sets the attempt to licence all individual sets is an exercise in frustration. But no one seems to have figured this out. And so we have periodical 'amnesties' followed by calls to the public to pay up or else. Why does not someone introduce some common-



Even buying a stamp is no picnic

sense into this operation and come up with a scheme to licence (i) premises and (ii) vehicles with receiving sets fitted to them? Revenue will increase, the public will be less inconvenienced and the headache of collecting this tax will disappear.

4 Or take the case of the issue of birth certificates. If M. C. can get one within six months of applying for it he is lucky. Every year the position becomes worse not better. Yet the birth certificate is a vital document which every citizen needs at various stages of his life. Why should not the RG plan at least for the future years by issuing free (or for a small fee) say five copies of a birth certificate with the registration of each birth? As the years go by the problem would have solved itself. If this means the law has to be amended, amend it.

5 As our final example let us take the case of M.C.'s telephone bill that comes only once in two months. Why must this incredible shoddiness be allowed to continue? Is it beyond the genius of our bureaucrats to manage to send M.C. his telephone bill once a month? In Singapore the subscriber pays only a telephone rental. All local calls are free. If you were to suggest such a scheme to our telephone department bureaucrats they will no doubt reply that it would result in all lines being permanently blocked by subscribers making unnecessary calls. That is the way the bureaucrat's mind works.

Although I have quoted only a few examples every member of the public is aware that this kind of bureaucratic indifference to the convenience of the public is the norm and not the exception. There is no doubt that these sources of annoyance can be eradicated. If the government were to invite representations from the public it would surely receive a flood of information about other similar cases. Such things are the direct result of a certain attitude of mind some of our bureaucrats have that it is their convenience and not that of the public that must take precedence. I find it impossible to believe that this attitude of mind cannot be changed by firm measures. All the same it is a sad fact that no government has hitherto been able to do it.

F. R. LEAVIS

From rebellion to tyranny

F. R. Leavis (who died last month at the age of 82) began as a rebel against the English critical establishment of his day. For this offence, compounded as it was by his middle-class origin (his father was a Cambridge shopkeeper), he was at first snubbed, cold-shouldered and deprived of academic advancement at Cambridge. He never forgot these early slights, and even when he was already celebrated he would erupt from time to time in a letter to some periodical recalling an injustice suffered at the hands of the literary establishment thirty or forty years previously. His pupil and admirer Ronald Hayman says that in the course of his lectures Leavis would relate to his class 'lengthy anecdotes that demonstrated how he had been the victim of misinterpretation and deliberate misrepresentation'.

Yet what has happened to many rebels in many other spheres happened to Leavis: he ended as the head of an orthodoxy no less rigid and tyrannical than the one he had overthrown. This was all the more inevitable because he was a markedly authoritarian figure who did not tolerate dissent easily. That is why *Scrutiny*, so lively and stimulating in its early years, became later so depressingly predictable: you knew beforehand what the faithful Leavisites, echoing the Master, would say on a given writer or work.

In Sri Lanka's small world of Eng. Lit. the tyranny of Leavisism has been perhaps even stronger than in its original home. Take just one example: the case of Dickens. It used to be taken for granted that at A Level or at University there was only one novel of Dickens fit to be prescribed as a text *Hard Times*. There was a simple reason for this: in *The Great Tradition* Leavis



had pronounced that this was Dickens's one great novel. I remember an academic being shocked in the mid-sixties by the fact that on one of the campuses I had prescribed *Great Expectations* (a much richer novel than *Hard Times*, to my mind). Then, in 1970 Leavis (together with his wife) brought out a book on Dickens in which he went back on what

he had said earlier and admitted no less than six novels of Dickens to the canon.

It was, of course, to Leavis's credit that, unlike many of his disciples, he was capable of growth and change, and that he kept developing as a critic to the end (though he rarely liked to admit that he had ever been wrong).

His attitude to Eliot as poet and critic is a striking example of this development. Leavis's assessment of Eliot, which began with the early idolatry of *New Bearings in English Poetry*, went through a steady downgrading, culminating in the 1967 essay on the critic and the 1975 study of the poetry. To those of us who had already concluded that Eliot's work was life-denying and pervaded by snobbery, Leavis's last thoughts were less than startling, but the controversy in *Universities Quarterly* that followed showed what a shock they had been to some of his own critical following.

Yet Leavis, for all his devotion to the integrity of criticism and his incisiveness and rigour, was limited in several ways. With an almost aggressive insistence on the Englishness of English literature, he refused to concern himself as a critic with literature in other languages (except for one essay on *Anna Karenina* and another on Montale). This seriously constricted his critical horizons, particularly in dealing with the novel, since even the best English novelists seem provincial and insular, in comparison with the nineteenth-century Russian and French masters. Leavis's perpetuation of the English myth of Jane Austen as a great novelist, for instance, would have been impossible if he had looked at her in a wider European perspective (what does she mean to a Russian or French reader?).

Even more limiting was his critical method of close verbal analysis. He tended to rate most highly those poets in whom he found the kind of sensuous particularity and verbal complexity that lent itself most readily to his method. Hence, for instance, his marked preference for Keats over Shelley, in whom he found a 'weak grasp of the actual'. One can agree that Keats was the superior artist, that he had a surer feeling for language than Shelley, without conceding that this makes him the greater poet in every sense. Keats showed a fine sensitivity within a relatively narrow

range of experience, largely aesthetic, where Shelley was a poet responsive to the central social and political experiences of his age, and we cannot compare him with Keats without giving due weight to his greater range of awareness.

Leavis's method was an even more inadequate tool in criticism of the novel. The essential concern of the great novelists is with man in his social environment, and the scope and depth of a novelist's understanding of his characters in their social relations is crucial to a judgement of his work. Leavis admitted Jane Austen and Henry James to his 'great tradition' though their novelistic imagination works within very narrow limitations of class and milieu. On the other hand, he relegated Emily Brontë to a footnote (although *Wuthering Heights* is the most powerful treatment in the English language of the conflict between class and natural human feeling), and was extremely patronising to Hardy. Hardy's prose is uneven in quality, but his social world is much more substantial than that of James, whose characters are often disembodied sensitive intelligences quivering in a void.

In his book on Leavis, Ronald Hayman claims that he is 'the most important critic of this century'. I don't accept this view. Without going any further afield, I would say that Raymond Williams, who was educated at Leavis's Cambridge but has developed and matured in an independent way, is a much more important critic for his ability to relate literature illuminatingly to its wider social context. *Modern Tragedy, The English Novel from Dickens to Lawrence* and *The Country and the City* are works in which the social judgments are not 'added on' to the literary analysis — as in the simplified 'Marxist' studies of literature against which Leavis used to protest in the thirties. Williams is able to show how moral values and literary forms are inextricably interwoven with the social context from which they arise.

Cinema Excellent crafted

The changing values of popular western cinema is best illustrated by the changing faces of its villains. It's not merely a matter of the Injun no longer being the bad guy. Racial prejudice, western cultural snobbery and Cold War imbecilities are rarely found these days. And the politics can be quite adult and up-to-date. The villains range from the Pentagon to the Mafia and the multi-nationals. In a recent movie 'Sweeney' an un-named oil giant was trying to fix oil prices at an international conference by black mailing a British Cabinet Minister.

In 'The Cassandra Crossing' the Pentagon has infiltrated the World Health Organisation, thinly disguised as the International Health Organisation, to conduct secret experiments in germ warfare. Two Swedish 'peace protesters' invade the headquarters but fail in their attempt to destroy the laboratory. One of the attackers succeeds in escaping. On board a train carrying a 1000 passengers across Europe, he is the carrier of a vicious plague.

The train has to be sealed off, hermetically...and destroyed. With cynical precision and cunning, the whole US Military 'complex' moves into action. The film ends ironically enough, with an open-ended question on the future of the man who executed the fiendish contingency plan.

Burt Lancaster is effective as the US intelligence officer 'doing his duty' and Ava Gardner is superb as the ageing countess, accompanied by poodle and human pet. A lesson in acting comes from Lee Strasberg a man who has taught so many an actor his craft.

This is not exactly a block-buster 'disaster' movie which made the box office bounce in recent years. It touches on some serious issues but does not dwell on them too long as the plot moves at a cracking pace on the familiar rails of an excellently crafted story. — C. P. H.

A NATION OF WIFE - BEATERS?

Prof. T. L. Green, the Ceylon University's first Professor of Education, once startled an academic audience with the claim that we Ceylonese were a nation of wife-beaters! Beneath the conventional view of the woman (an idealized image) were so many male prejudices about a woman's place in society and in the home. Superiority, discrimination and oppression was the result.

Dr. Kumari Jayewardene presented this paper at a conference in Teheran organised by the U. N. Centre for Woman and Development in Asia.

It was the Utopian Socialist, Charles Fourier who first claimed that one could judge the progress of a society by observing the status of women in that society. There is a striking similarity in the condition of women who live under comparable economic and social systems, irrespective of country, culture or historic period. Women in patriarchal feudal society had no independent existence. In mediaeval India and China, in feudal Russia or in mediaeval Europe, the cultural disparities are outweighed by the strong similarities in the situation of women in these societies.

It is not a coincidence that just as Confucius spoke of Three Obediences for women—to the father when young, to the husband when married and to the sons when widowed—the laws of Manu (in India) said of a woman, "The father protects her in childhood, the husband protects her in her youth and sons protect her in her old age." The Third World countries—which inspite of differences—have common heritages of feudalism, long periods of occupation by colonial powers and dependant economies have enabled us to identify many common problems relating to the women.

The criteria often used to evaluate the "quality of life" of women in a country are the education and literacy levels of women, their economic activity in work outside the home, their standards of health, their participation in public life and the achievements of equal rights with men. In Sri Lanka 70% of the women are literate, their life expectancy is 67 years, they form nearly

48% of school goers and 40% of all university students and about 30% of the work force; maternal and infant mortality figures are low, and the country produced the first woman prime minister in the world.

But the statistics hide the reality which is that the mass of women, like their sisters in other parts of Asia, are subject to various disabilities caused by the persistence of the traditions and beliefs of feudal society, are exploited economically in industry, plantations and agriculture, continue to bear the dual burden of labour and family responsibilities and still have a very long road to travel before they achieve real emancipation.

The traditional concept

In Sri Lanka, as in all patriarchal societies, women have always had a subordinate status, although the degrees of subordination have varied with class, religion and ethnic group. Since the early inhabitants of Sri Lanka were migrants from India, and since close links were maintained between Sri Lanka and India, the social system and the ideology relating to women was very similar in the two cultures. Of the many beliefs and views on the role of women, we can isolate four main attitudes, which best represent the traditional viewpoint.

The first is that women's primary role is in the home, as a daughter, wife and mother, subordinate to the male members of the family. She has no independent existence and is considered to "belong" to the male in whose home she lives. If she has no man to lean on or no male children, the

situation is considered to be 'unlucky' or 'unfortunate' as in the case of widows, spinsters and women with no sons. Many proverbs illustrate this point. For example widowhood is compared to a natural disaster; "A breach in an (irrigation) tank and a widow in a house are alike", says a Sinhala proverb and in Tamil there is a saying "She who has no husband is like sand in the bed of a river".

It is not surprising that where women are exploited and oppressed there also arises a cult of women as goodness and queen. For instance in the land where women were illiterate the goddess of learning Saraswati was a woman, and where women had little chance of economic independence, the goddess of wealth (Lakshmi) was a woman; Romantic idealisation of women, and a sentimental attitude to motherhood are also notable features of our society today. Many third rate films have titles such as "Sugar Girl", "Golden Mother" to name a few, and phoney film songs about mothers are plentiful (May my mother become a Buddha", etc).

But inspite of all this hypocritical glorification of "womanhood" a woman is expected not only to be subordinate, docile and modest but also to appear so in the eyes of the world. She has to endure all suffering, be patient and uncomplaining and not protest on any occasion. An indication of the behaviour expected in a woman, namely that she possess all these qualities and that she in addition be a willing servant to her husband, caretaker of his property and possessions, and a beautiful plaything as well, can be illustrated from Sinhala and Tamil Classics.

The second traditional concept of women concerns their intellectual abilities. Women were denied opportunities for education and the idea of a learned woman was ridiculed as something unnatural. Knowledge, intellectual debate, decision making, and participation in economic and political life were considered to be men's spheres of influence.

The literature and popular proverbs of Sri Lanka illustrate these views: "A woman's brain cannot perceive anything further than the handle of a spoon" (a Sinhala saying). The following Tamil proverbs emphasise the same point. "No matter how skilled a woman may be in mathematics, her judgement will be second rate"; "The thoughts of a woman are after-thoughts"; "He who listens to the advice of a woman is a fool."

In school text books used today in Sri Lanka schools, women are always portrayed in the house, cooking, sweeping and sewing and daughters helping mother in these activities. Father in contrast goes out to work and returns to read a newspaper, listen to the radio or help the son with mechanical work. Although over a quarter of the labour force is composed of women these books never show women at work, in decision making situations, in social activities outside the home or in intellectual pursuits.

Third is the popular myth that women are the source of many evils, deceitful, cunning and full of wiles, tempting men and leading them astray. These views are no doubt linked to the protests that women have made against their subordinate status, which have taken many forms. Warnings against a section of people whom one is oppressing are a common practice; and whether the group be slaves, serfs, wage workers of women the arguments used are similar: that these people are congenitally 'bad', that you cannot trust them, that they will never learn, that they will intrigue against you and conspire to obtain more privileges.

As Confucius, (lumping the Chinese masses and women together) wrote "The populace and women are ignorant, filled with bad instincts and hard to educate". The proverbs of Sri Lanka are also full of warnings against the 'wickedness' of women. The classic view is that women use '64 wiles' to get their way; and there is a Sinhala proverb which says "why take a ladder to the gallows when you can go there easily with the help of a woman"?

The fourth attitude which permeates all traditional cultures is that woman has to be evaluated in terms of a stereotype of physical attractiveness. This standard varies according to cultures; the Indo-Sri Lanka recipe is that the ideal woman has to have blue-black hair which reaches to the ground, eyes like lotuses, teeth like pearls and an undulating gait like an elephant. A much-quoted verse from Selalihini Sandesaya written in the 15th century (and heavily influenced by Sanskrit poetry) describes a beautiful woman:

*"A face like the full-moon,
A waist that can be clasped
in a fistful,
Hips as wide as a chariot
wheel,
Breasts like swans, golden-skipped
She is a celestial maiden but for
the fluttering of her eyelids"*

However, these attitudes, although originating in an earlier form of society, still persist today and are perpetuated in art and the mass media. The newspapers are full of advertisements where scantily-clad women urge people to buy radios, tyres, cigarettes and all manner of products, while beauty contests are held all over the country.

The revolt against this cult of beauty has already begun; one of the country's best known Sinhala poets, Monica Ruwanpathirana, has redefined the classic five concepts of a beautiful woman or Pancha Kalyani (who had to be young, well-rounded with fine bone structure, a good complexion and beautiful hair) and has suggested the attributes of the 'new woman'

*"She recognises the reality of the
society around her,
She dedicates herself to its future,
She sets alight the world with her
talents,
She acts with firmness and
resolve,
She works for the well-being of
society,
These truly are the five qualities
of beauty,
That will make a new Pancha
Kalyani."*

The wife's role

The following verses are from Kavyasekeraya, composed in the 15th century. They are often included in school texts (Sinhala Grade 9) and give an idea of the typical traditional concept of a woman. In this work the old Brahmin father gives the following advice to his daughter on her marriage:-

*"Do not leave your house
without your husband's permission;
when you go out, do not
walk fast and see that you are
properly clad."*

*Be like a servant to your
husband, his parents and his
kinsmen."*

*Do not admit to your companion-
ship the fickle courtesan,
the thief, the servant, the actress,
the dancer, the flower-girl or the
washer woman."*

*Sweep your house and garden
regularly and see that it is always
clean. Make sure that you light
the lamps to the gods both at
dawn and dark."*

*When your husband returns
home from a journey, receive him
joyously and wash his feet; do
not delegate this task to servants."*

*Do not spend your time stand-
ing at your door, strolling about
in gardens and parks, and do not
be lazy at your household duties."*

*Protect the gods, in your
house. Do not give anything away
even to your own children, with-
out your husband's consent."*

*If your husband's affection
seems directed elsewhere, do not
speak to him about it, let your
tears be the only indication of
your sorrow."*

*Seek out your husband's
desires in food and see that he
is constantly satisfied, feed him
and ensure well-being like a
mother."*

*When you go to your husband
let it be like a goodness, beauti-
ful, clad in colourful silks, orna-
ments and sweet-smelling perfumes."*

*Be the last to go to bed and
the first to rise. When your hus-
band wakes, see that you are
by his side."*

*Even if your husband appears
angry and cold, do not speak
roughly to him; be kind and for-
giving. Never think of look else-
where for your comfort."*

Lanka: social welfare, economic crisis

A new study

Sri Lanka has since the time of its independence (1948) been described both as a development failure and a success, appellations which are perhaps inherently irrelevant and which would certainly not be useful for the ensuing discussion. Nevertheless, what does this mean? In the first instance, the country has not obtained prodigious levels of GNP and would therefore be deemed a 'failure' if high GNP equals development. In the second instance, if the satisfaction of basic needs of a population is any indication of development, then Sri Lanka might well have achieved 'success'.

In the latter case, the difficulty arises in determining what are basic needs and further at what qualitative level these might then be judged satisfied. Consequently, the workshop might be said to have grappled with three issues: What are basic needs within the development context; how might these be met while maintaining the development momentum; and, finally, how have needs satisfaction been approached in Sri Lanka?

Participants from the Marga Institute (which has been described as an institute which attempts to understand the development process in Sri Lanka as a whole) and from the International Foundation for Development Alternatives (which promotes dialogue between three groups—policy makers, researchers and opinion leaders on new approaches to development) were engaged in a *mutually educating dialogue* on these issues, bearing in mind the particular manifest throughout the period of the discussion, one of the principal areas of controversy being the accuracy of some of the data presented. Nevertheless, the given data indicates a certain trend. But how relevant are the kinds of indicators presented: life expectancy, literacy rates, death rates? Aggregating the results experienced in

When GNP was the main criterion of evaluation used by international agencies, Ceylon was a dismal "failure" in the conventional wisdom of these experts. But these conventional criteria have now changed and other concepts of "development" have gained acceptance. A few years ago, Mr. McNamara himself named Sri Lanka as an outstanding example of "development" defined according to the criteria in vogue. Mr. James Grant, Chairman of the Overseas Development Council, Washington, has advertised Sri Lanka's many achievements in terms of the Physical Quality of Life Index (PQLI). And now it is being said that we are a "development" success, perhaps even a "model" for other Third World countries. How should our post-independence performance be judged? Is a total judgment possible?

The 'Lanka Guardian' has been given permission to publish excerpts from a 45-page report of a workshop held some months back by the Marga Institute in collaboration with the International Foundation for Development Alternatives (IFDA) in Colombo. It was opened by Mr. M. Naina Marikkar, Deputy Minister of Planning, and was addressed also by Mr. Lalith Athulathmudali, Minister of Trade, and Mr. G. V. P. Samarasinghe, Secretary to the Cabinet.

The foreign participants included Mr. Marc Nerfin, President IFDA, Mr. Ahmed Ben Salah, former Minister of Development in Tunisia, Dr. Carlos Delgado of Peru, Mr. Sergio Bitar, President Allende's Minister of Mining, Professor Tamas Szentes of Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Professor Ignazy Sachs, Dr. Rudolf Stavenhagen of Mexico, Dr. Rajni Kothari of the Indian Council of Social Sciences, Mr. O. T. Granda (UNDP), Dr. Jarle Haarstad of the Norwegian Agency for Development.

The Sri Lankan participants included Dr. W. M. Tillekeratne, Dr. Susantha Goonetilleke, Mr. Godfrey Goonetilleke, Director Marga, Dr. S. B. de Silva, Mr. C. Narayansamy ARTI, Professor A. V. Indraratne, Mr. Leelananda de Silva, Dr. Neelan Tiruchelvam, Dr. Ponna Wignarajah, Mr. Chandra Soysa, Mr. E. L. Wijemanne and Mr. Mervyn de Silva.

these areas, Sri Lanka has rated high on a Physical Quality of Life Index 1/(83/100) being propounded as a measure of needs-satisfaction.

But as an aggregate, is a Physical Quality of Life Index (PQLI) valid as a measure of development? Perhaps as a counter to the highly irrelevant GNP concept, PQLI promises a discussion of a new way to approach a study of development, that is, through social indicators. But it is certainly not sufficient in itself to determine whether progress towards development has taken place. Indicators such as these may confirm the terminal point, not the route taken, an important

consideration. Further, the PQLI neglects as an indicator the satisfaction of a non-material needs, such as the extent to which local participation is encouraged, which must necessarily be a component of a need-oriented development strategy.

If a discussion on development begins with the pre-supposition that the process is equally as important as the product, then the PQLI becomes a non-starter.

With these reservations an attempt was then made to examine and endeavour to understand what has happened in Sri Lanka, a country

engaged in the process of development.

It is increasingly apparent that few new ideas are required to advance development. The problem is principally that of implementation. How, given the specific situation of a country, is this development to take place? Many of the other questions have been answered at least in the minds of certain actors. What development?—need-oriented, self-reliant, endogenous, in harmony with the environment and based on structural change. Who will undertake the functions and for whom? This development will be undertaken by those people whose development is being encouraged. Where? Throughout the global society, North and South. The when and why require no statement.

The exigency of development often provokes a preoccupation with the speed or pace of that development. However, more important than whether things are done immediately is the direction, the process. Stated otherwise, the 'perspectives' the 'societal vision', should perhaps describe any preoccupation.

Noteworthy

If a different strategy—rejecting the traditional, Western promulgated patterns of 'development'—is being sought for countries such as Sri Lanka, then given certain similarities of experiences, a few elements might be noteworthy:

- culture should be given equal weighting among other factors under consideration, appreciating the manifest diversities of people;

- the implementation problem referred to previously is not a technical issue. The issue is to a greater extent creating a *will of development*, employing perhaps ideology as a possible resource for development;

- central to a new strategy will be the problem of power. How are groups, political parties, new forces, to be organized

to sustain the process of development?

- these new forces will have to be organized wherever people are, wherever people function. The requisite organization cannot only take place at the level of "people's representatives" nor can it be a function of these. In particular, political party leaders cannot assume the task of developing new power structures since historically the political party operates as a mechanism which concentrates rather than transfers power, and in addition, party leaders have tended to demonstrate a rather selfish craving for power;

- the new organisations will be essential to the capacity of the system for expansion. Expansion does not refer to growth in percentages, but rather suggests the capacity for movement, a capacity to respond to pressure from these new forces which itself is capable of generating pressure urging even deeper structural changes;

- failure in attempts at alternative strategies should not reflect a fault in the choice of strategy, an inherent impotence of the process, nor should it encourage rejection of the process;

- that failure perhaps reflects a number of elements, being among them:

- failure to comprehend the conditions of power operating.

- neglect of the trajectory, the conditions for movement from one stage to another, without bringing that stage to a conclusion.

- incongruity between political and economic strategies,

- absence of checks in the system to ensure, for example, that power had indeed been transferred to workers,

- paucity of popular education to prepare peasant consciousness,

- attempts to generalize within a country rejecting internal diversities;

- what is perhaps termed a failure might otherwise be termed an incomplete success. Failure lies in the inability to sustain the process at a desired level. However, given the reality of that political action, there can never really be any going back as is evidenced by pressure presently building up in countries which have lived—regardless of brevity—a different societal vision;

- the action for a development for people, by people—and which will evidence the realised potentialities of those people, will not be of a purely 'economic' nature. The *political* must reinforce all other forms of action.

For any new government or new 'project' the first actions will be critical. These initial actions will perhaps move the system in a given direction or, alternatively, into a process from which changes at a later stage becomes difficult.

The direction

In Sri Lanka the direction is evidently towards satisfying the basic needs of the majority of the population. Whether this is a result of a conscious choice or a response to certain demands is not presently under discussion. However, what might be brought into question at this time is the relationship between what is frequently termed 'basic needs' and development. There is obviously a direct relationship. But in a country where the 'basic needs' are seemingly adequately met, at the same time what might be described as the development dynamic appears to be absent. What does that suggest? That these 'basic needs' have not in fact been met in Sri Lanka, or that 'basic needs' need to be (re) defined?

("A Physical Quality of Life Index" in *International Development Review* (1976/4))

(To be continued)

Getting the priorities right

Sport has occupied an intriguing role in Sri Lanka with British style games such as cricket, rugby, soccer and tennis entrenching themselves in the metropolis and, with the exception of soccer, bearing a strong upper middle class character. But little or no organised sport seems to have percolated into the backward rural areas, leaving the people there to fend for themselves which is just another way of saying that successive governments have accorded them step-motherly treatment.

The explanation often trotted out for this unequal state of affairs is that Sri Lanka with its attendant and multifarious economic problems can ill afford to be playing games and that what games are played must therefore be the responsibility of individuals or private bodies. Now this is a load of crap and is a mere repetition of the hen or egg argument. Does prosperity precede health or does good health lead to prosperity?

Man-sized job

The Sports Council, a statutory body of comparatively recent origin has a man-sized job on its hands having to co-ordinate the various sporting strands in Sri Lanka. To begin with, it is essential that it gets its priorities right and in this matter will have to decide whether sports geared to international competition should take precedence over sports designed to encourage mass participation.

It seems both foolish and futile that we should be expending energy and resources to gain recognition in Twickenham, Lords or Wimbledon when 95% of the population know nothing of these games. By all means let private enterprise sponsor them but state patronage for these sports is little short of a crime.

Right now the paramount question is to popularise sports among the people and to help do this the Central body must have an awareness of the social and economic conditions in which our people live. Teaching them to kick, to touch can be a cruel joke. Whatever the popularity that cricket, tennis and rugby may enjoy in urban areas the hard reality is that its participants are inadequate to make them worthwhile propositions.

The prime task of the Sports administrator is to persuade large numbers into active participation and this can only be achieved if the basic requirement is provided. In this instance that facility is the availability of space and even the meanest local body must be coerced into providing this fundamental need.

Meaningful activity

For a beginning then it should be possible to launch out on inexpensive team sports like football or volleyball and of course track and field athletics which is the obviously meaningful activity for our people. Once large enough numbers take to running and jumping, which really is doing what comes naturally, then the Sports Council can get to the next stage of encouraging its participants and perhaps scouting around for talent in the regional areas with a view to specialised coaching. But that is a different story and a much later one but for the present let's be sensible and forget international participation because we are nowhere near the required basic standards. I am firmly convinced that track and field athletics is our best bet even for international competition provided the basic opportunities are afforded to the great mass of the people.

Attitude of press

To illustrate the relative unimportance attached to track and field athletics one need only view the attitude of the Sinhala and English press to the annual National athletics tournament. Invariably this significant event is either

blackened out or buried in an obscure corner. If the Sports Council can convince the press barons that National athletics deserve as much and as forceful a coverage as school cricket a great breakthrough would have been made and spectator interest in this awakened from the stupor in which it presently is.

I have also been amazed at the way swimming has been allowed to languish in Sri Lanka. For a country surrounded by water and studded with innumerable inland waterways it is surprising that greater interest has not been galvanised in this inexpensive sport. I am not now here thinking of producing Olympic champions but it is surely within the realms of possibility to arouse enthusiasm for swimming amongst the rural people.

If Olympic and international contests must occupy the centre of any thinking then it is logical that track and field athletics and swimming with their mass potential offer greater hope than for instance rifle shooting.

Constant bickerings

The task of the Sports Council has not been made any easier by the constant bickerings of the various controlling bodies. Quite often factionalism has proved a serious impediment to the smooth functioning of many sports and while conceding the usefulness of individual administrative bodies the Sports Council has a duty to take remedial action against those who by their antics bring Sri Lanka sport into disrepute.

Recently one saw the sorry spectacle of two Sri Lankan sports 'idols' of yesteryear flaying each other in a hall of justice no doubt to the delight and applause of their camp followers. The Law Courts seem quite a favourite with sportsmen in Sri Lanka and why not, when even self-righteous politicians keep running there. Well who am I anyway to dampen the ardour of would be litigants.

Aerial affairs

"In keeping with the ancient customs of the Sinhala kings, the President, Mr. J. R. Jayewardene, walked up to the aircraft to receive the relics....."

Page 1 item in Ceylon Daily News

A document in the British Museum which if discovered by Silva, Roberts or Vimalananda could make a best-selling book or a pedantic thesis, bear witness to the strict adherence of Sinhala monarchs to these airport ceremonies or what used to be called, as the Mahavamsa, records it, the VIPMAGUL because the ceremony usually took place near the VIP Lounge.

In fact in the reign of the wise king, Vimaladharmasuriya the Foreign Office put out a small booklet with all the details of the programme, such as "8.17 a.m. King arrives and takes his seat, facing East; 8.19 a.m. the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, rises, facing west.....etc etc". (If anything went wrong, the Prime Minister, facing the music usually, was borne away by the palace guards).

If we are to believe the Culavamsa, Rajasinghe could be exasperatingly punctilious about these airport customs. The reference of course is to Rajasinghe II and not his grandson Rajasinghe III who hated airplanes and never flew, except into a royal temper..... which accounts for the high mortality rate among his courtiers and concubines. Rajasinghe II on the other hand loved to travel so much that a contemporary columnist named him Roving Raja.

In the reign of the tyrannical Buvenaka Bahu (734 a.d. to 751 a.d.) a Cabinet minister's wife got into very serious trouble when she tried to ignore the ancient customs.

Returning from a trip to Singhapura (now Singapore), one of the overseas territories of the greater Sinhala kingdom and a free trade zone, she carried a bagful of nylax

sarees, and sailed passed the barrier completely ignoring the ancient customs officer who was waving a T. and D. form.

The anonymous authors of the Great Book note cryptically: "After her husband was given a portfolio, she really lost her head". (Beheading at the time was mandatory although not, as in the dark era of the Portuguese commander, Diaz, retro-active).

"Where's my malla? Where's my malla (bag)?" was the signature tune of the egoistic, demanding King Nissanka Malla who used to walk up to the Air Ceylon plane insisting that his luggage be unloaded first. The jolly King Atala-Tissa never complained when Air Ceylon, true to its reputation, over-carried his baggage. Once, when his baggage (an old hag, anyway) was over-carried to Papua-New Guinea, the old boy leapt in joy and took a South Indian princess for his queen.

The custom of 'Walking up to the aircraft' was so *de rigueur* in ancient times that King Vallagambahu who ousted the rapacious Queen Anula prompted his son Prince Vallagambahu Jr. to despatch a tom-tom beater around town yelling this highly embarrassing question.

a) Is the King aware that Queen Anula who did so many trips abroad, during her short reign never walked up to the aircraft but descended proudly in a *helickaputa* (a native invention later stolen by the Douglas Corporation, USA, and made into a helicopter)?

b) If so, why?

c) If not, why not?

The wily queen who still had a following underground (not the insurgents who were also underground but permanently so) put out a street-ballad (kavi kola) cyclo-styled giving these replies:

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a) During the relevant period slave labour used for the Bandaranaike Airport Accelerated Development Scheme was on a go-slow and Air Ceylon was grounded in Frankfurt.

b) Does not arise (the question, not the plane)

c) See above.

Sceptical Sri Lankans, spoiled by modern education, may tend to regard these facts as flights of fancy so to say. But there is indisputable

evidence of the sophisticated interest and traditional respect for all matters aerial and aeronautical.

Only the other evening I was walking past the Sri Lanka Air Force headquarters when a streamer advertising the film "Seetha Devi" boldly announced "See Ravana, the world's first pilot.....".

But Seetha Devi had walked up to an Ilyushin 62 at the BIA and taken off to the Tashkent festival. Following another ancient custom, I sauntered along to the Galle Face Green to see another shore.

Tigers ...

(Continued from page 3)

The IGP has spoken of 'educated Tamil youth' using sophisticated methods. In a predictable 'law-and-order' response, the security forces are now trying to match this "sophistication" with "sophistication." In practice, this means tighter organisation, better and tested anti-terrorist techniques and of course technology.

The police now favour the phrase 'search and destroy', an expression popularised by the Americans during the Vietnam war. Soon we may hear of 'strategic hamlets', 'pacification', 'special forces', 'green berets', and 'electronic barriers', and other coinages of Vietnam vintage. A D.I.G. is in Europe right now on a special course.

New techniques, organisational methods, weapons and the latest gadgetry are of course useful to any outfit engaged in combative action. And "counter-insurgency" can now claim its own corpus of ideas and technical literature.

Sometimes old organisations with obsolete ideas and instruments are forced into "sophistication" by the pressure of a sudden eruption (like the 1971 insurgency) or of an unprecedented event that puts new demands on one's limited experience (like the 1976 non-aligned Summit). Thrown into battle, our ill-equipped

army was soon supplied with new weapons, in 1971, just as the police in 1976 got used to new surveillance and gadgets.

But two questions crop up. First the techniques may be relevant only to certain conditions. The second is a more basic question. Can technology match motivation? There was no lack of equipment or money in Vietnam and no lack of brains. (nobody could have been cleverer than McNamara).

Of course, the situation in Vietnam was totally different. The lesson however is that of the mosquito, the swamp and the elephant helplessly weighed down by his own weight.

Besides, a 'political' act involves politics, and requires a political solution, or at least a politico-military solution.

The fundamental issue therefore involves the whole 'Tamil question', the problem of a national minority, the policies of a government, the response of the established leadership of the community, and the possibilities of compromise.

Otherwise (to use the same terminology) there will be "escalation" which suits the man on the offensive, rarely the "defending army", however strong. In the end, it has to do with politics, and that means people, not just tigers or any other marauding animal.

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