A TRIGGER - HAPPY DEMOCRACY?

The recent sordid event at Mulleriyawa in our motherland raises a number of questions in anyone's mind.

Aren't we tired of killing after all the terror in the South and then in the North? Didn't we celebrate the Sambuddha Jayanthi this year?

Isn't the country brimming with Buddhist compassion and respect for humanity?

Isn't that the message that Sri Lankan President delivered to the Big Powers and the rest of the world at the UN Assembly?

What is the use of offering advice if we cannot follow that at home? Answers to all these questions have to be found and put into practice by the people of the land themselves. What we can do is only to offer our ideas and suggestions for anyone to take note of.

Let me start with an oft-repeated statement that irritates Buddhist leaders of Sri Lanka. That is the unkind statement of the land of virtue (DHARMADVIPA) becoming the land of crime. However I do not want to repeat that, but would like to look at issues separately without generalizing them for public consumption or dramatic effect. Even if we grant that these are unforeseen things that can happen in any country the recent spate of political crimes do not pose a rosy picture befitting a decent democracy, forgetting about the Buddhist perspective of it.
Some people would prefer to call Sri Lanka a Buddhist country with its own brand of

socialism not looking for approval of the so-called Big Democracies. They may even call it a kind of Buddhist Socialism. They may go further and declare that they do not want the approval of powers that be to run their own countries and governments as they think fit.

How does this new pudding taste? Does it taste any better than the hackneyed democratic pudding? Or does it leave a bitter taste in the mouth? Can others detect the sour face we try to hide after the repast? On the other hand, don't we ourselves get tired of this tomfoolery? How long are we going to fool ourselves with this mask which everyone else sees is far below the acceptable level in decent society?

the unseen erosion of freedom, safety and even the value of human life (if that belongs to an unwanted individual).

When there is a planned operation to guide the thoughts and the very thinking pattern of the masses we are sure to see the dawn of the social order that the famous writer

Will this murder too go the same way as that of Lasantha WIckreamatunga and so many others?

One simple truth pops up now and again to poke fun at them, quoting the very, common saying that the proof of the pudding is in the eating.

Behind the Mulleriyawa incident a whole host of secret operations and flexing of arms seem to have gone on well before the event. It is reported that the Police at least were aware of the upcoming man-hunt. That alone raises a number of questions, which remain unanswered. Answers may never be found. Such is the complexity and unpredictability of Sri Lankan life.

Let me begin by asking a few valid questions. Do not expect these queries to be taken seriously by anyone in power. But the questions are important all the same.

Why was M.P. Dayasiri Jayasekera not allowed to make the statement he wanted in Parliament?

Didn't he, later say that if he was allowed he would have warned authorities about what was to come?

If an opposition M.P. knew it in advance, why didn't those responsible for maintaining law and order take preventive action? They couldn't possibly be ignorant of it.

Who ordered the killing of the innocent victim?
Why was he ear-marked for the bullet? What was the secret love affair that had to be thwarted?

Why couldn't the parents correct the son without sacrificing the life of a father? How many more lives would this kind of machinations cost the country?

Last but not least, will this murder too go the same way as that of Lasantha

WIckreamatunga and so many others? Chances are that this will ultimately fall into that category. What is more disturbing is that people will gradually forget it and fail to see

George Orwell created in his epoch-making novel 1984, with its new Police force known as the 'Thought Police." That writer was only mocking at the system of control Soviet Russia had adopted. That was the patten under the rule of Joseph Stalin. However, what occurred under Stalin was symptomatic of all communist regimes, however innocent and genuine their original intentions were. Communists all over the world believe that their solution to social problems is the best available and ought to be continuously applied for the good of the mankind. So far so good, but at the point they decide that it is their sole right to deliver the goods unforeseen consequences follow.

Their main concern becomes to remain in power in order to complete the job they began. No one else is, in their view, capable of doing that. Their focus is turned more towards the more important new target of remaining in power, and that at any cost. Everything else falls into second place, the freedom they clamoured for, value of human life, respect for individuals, and even the capacity of individuals to think for themselves. That too can be dangerous for the rulers.

Aren't we coming to that, one may ask in the context of what happened at Mulleriyawa. I for one would not be surprised if the question is raised. My worry is that it may not happen, and this too will be consigned to the backwaters of history so that hardly any one will raise it.

How the investigations into the killing would go ahead and end cannot be predicted right now, because a lot of noise has been made about punishing all involved.

I may be painting the worst case scenario possible, and I may be proved completely off the mark at the end. But I want my doubts expressed for my own satisfaction. Let someone take note of it for a change. I see a process of gradual change, an erosion of long- held values and with that the confi-