Letters

Studies in Southeast Asia

Under the headline "Defense Department Ethnography" (Book Reviews, 31 May, p. 983), Edmund Leach chose to suggest that *Southeast Asian Tribes, Minorities, and Nations,* which I edited, is a political document, and then to review it by the standards of ethnography.

Many of the theoretical bases for studies of this type have come from Leach's work, a debt acknowledged repeatedly in the book, but the task set for the book was not the ethnography of Southeast Asian tribes. Some new ethnographic data are presented in areas where previously published information is slim, and some ethnographic background is included. This does not mean that the book pretends to be a "guidebook or gazetteer." Gazetteers tend to emphasize discreteness, isolation, and independence of "tribal" groups which are intimately tied to other groups, and one point of the book, as stated in the introduction, was to examine the relationships between such groups and central governments. The professional anthropologists among the contributors concentrated on describing and analyzing these relationships, and have published, or will publish, their major ethnographic contributions elsewhere.

Much of the recent stimulus for change in relationships between tribes and the Southeast Asian governments within whose territories they live has come from outsiders. American agencies and other governments have played major roles in these processes. I feel it important to document motives and intentions of the actors in these changing relationships. Some countries, including the People's Republic of China and Cambodia, did not answer my requests for information on minority policies, and we had to make do with what could be gleaned from outside sources. In spite of public interest and debate on Southeast Asian affairs, little firsthand work had been done on topics covered in the book when the articles were collected in 1965.

If the selection of contributors was in part "political" rather than academic, as Leach states, it is because the book deals with political subjects. He incorrectly suggests that U.S. military interests dictated the choice of areas covered. Southeast Asia exists as an area within which there are cultural, linguistic, historical, and political connections, all of which have been the subjects of specialized books, independent of U.S. military interests. The inclusion of a study of China's minority policies was justified first by ethnic similarities (many tribal minorities in Southeast Asia are small fractions of larger populations in China), and second by the fact that Chinese national minority policies estabished models followed elsewhere in Southeast Asia. The active role of China in influencing Southeast Asian minorities was not as well documented in 1965 as it is now. The reasons for including papers on Malaysian Borneo were not, as Leach believes, that "SEATO was offering a military confrontation to Indonesia along the borders of Sarawak." Crush Malaysia and Confrontation policies were proclaimed initially by Sukarno. Malaysian response was not through SEATO, but through use of her own troops, assisted by fellow Commonwealth members. As Harrisson shows in his article on Sarawak, the ethnically diverse population of Borneo poses important and interesting problems for the development of Malaysian national unity. These problems existed before and persist after Confrontation.

Leach correctly says the book includes papers prepared for a conference financed by the U.S. Department of Defense. The other papers were originally presented at a meeting of the American Anthropological Association, or were solicited by me after these two meetings. The choice of authors and topics was mine; neither the Department of Defense nor the American Anthropological Association exercised or sought to exercise control over the form or content of the book. Fieldwork on which 18 of the 21 papers were based was not supported by the Department of Defense.

Leach suggests we judge the quality of the articles by the briefness of Mote's stay among the Yunnanese of Thailand. Perhaps I misled Leach in my too brief mention of the circumstances of this fieldwork. Mote is professor of Chinese history at Princeton University, reads and writes Chinese, and is fluent in several Chinese dialects. He gained his fluency with the Yunnanese dialect during several years of study and residence in southwest China. He spent 2 years working on Thai government policies for education of Thai Chinese minorities. His stay in the particular area he described was brief, but he brought with him more extensive training and experience than any other observer of these people, who, unfortunately, have yet to be studied with the thoroughness modern ethnographic standards would dictate. The other contributors have all had from 1 to 20 years' experience in the areas of which they write.

Leach implies throughout his review that the book is somehow a justification of U.S. military policy. The book does not advocate U.S. or anyone else's policy, though it does describe policies. The contributors to the book represent a spectrum of political opinions, and although I have taken no poll, I know many of them are more dovelike than hawkish. I applaud *Science*'s continued airing of questions of relationships between science and government. I had hoped, however, that the editors and contributors would refrain from condemnation of a serious work on the basis of presumed political affiliation.

PETER KUNSTADTER*
Department of Anthropology, University of Washington, Seattle

* Mailing address: House 1, Soi 9, Charoen Prathet Road, Chiang Mai, Thailand.

College Image Urged for Vocational Training

Abelson's editorial, "Toward better vocational education" (16 Aug., p. 635), should be read by personnel in all types of institutions of higher learning. I suggest that experimental technical and mechanical institutes be established as part of certain first-class colleges and universities so that vocational or occupational training would receive a respectable image. The admission requirements for drop-out students should be only the desire to learn a gainful occupation. The institutions with 1- and 2-year curriculums would offer an associate degree to those who desire to work

for it, and would provide a diploma and job for those who are not degree-oriented. Tradesmen, mechanics, engineers, and placement and vocational counselors from industry should be among the visiting faculty. Instruction in automotive mechanics, maintenance of refrigeration, laundry and electronic equipment, radio, and aircraft belongs in such a curriculum. Also the building trade skills and laboratory techniques—all occupations found in any given community—should be taught. In addition, such vocational students would require a core program aimed at improving their academic skills in reading, comprehension, writing, and general communication.

Community surveys of labor needs administered periodically by the university and its technical and mechanical institute should determine the emphasis to be placed on instruction in various occupations. Labor leaders could serve as advisers in curriculum planning and placement. The mechanic or skilled craftsman of the future should not only have a "college image," but also should fill a basic need in the community as a most useful citizen instead of a dropout.

NATHAN S. WASHTON
Queens College, City University of New York, Flushing 11367

Automobile Exhaust Standards

In the "News and Comment" article by Andrew Jamison (5 July, p. 27), the stated 1970 exhaust emission standards recently set by the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare are incorrect. The correct standards are 2.2 grams per vehicle mile for hydrocarbons, 23 grams per vehicle mile for carbon monoxide, and no stated standard for oxides of nitrogen (*1*).

In addition, in 1971 a standard for fuel evaporative emissions will be in effect and hydrocarbons from this source shall not exceed 6 grams per test. Jamison has stated 1968–69 standards for the new 1970 standards, which are considerably more severe, especially for the larger displacement engines.

LYNN S. CRESSLER
General Motors Institute, 1700 West Third Avenue, Flint, Michigan 48502

Reference

1. *Federal Register* **33**, 8304 (1968).

Fight—or Ultimately Die

Ashley Montagu in his letter (6 Sept.) cites the Pueblo Indians, the Eskimo, the Bushmen, the Ifaluk, the Australian aborigines, and the Pygmies as having no internal urge to fight. While these peoples are to be admired for their tenacity in surviving in the inhospitable environments to which they have withdrawn, they can hardly be classed as successful or developing societies, and their futures are dark.

E. LLEWELLYN THOMAS
Department of Pharmacology, University of Toronto, Toronto 5, Canada

Computer and Console: Costs and Convenience

I agree with much of M. V. Mathews' article, "Choosing a scientific computer for service" (5 July, p. 23), particularly the "permanent computer" concept, but his comments on time sharing do not seem to apply to my own experiences in using time-sharing consoles for scientific computation. At commercial time-sharing service rates, I have found time sharing, over the past 3 years, to be a very inexpensive way of using a computer to help solve technical problems.

My console and phone line rents for about $90 per month from the telephone company. The time-sharing service costs a little over $10 per hour of actual use with a minimum charge of $100 per month. This adds up to a basic cost of about $200 per month, plus about $10 per hour for more than 10 hours per month use. The only way we could get a console up to the "$2000 to $3000 per month" mentioned by Mathews would be to provide only one console for many people so that the console would be busy *all* the time, 200 hours per month. We did this in the early days, but found that time sharing is of little value if the user has to wait half a day to get to the console. We also found this waiting time is a lot more costly than idle console time.

The people who use our time-sharing consoles cost our company about $12 per hour. An idle console costs about 50 cents per hour. A simple theory of queueing analysis that minimizes the cost of waiting people plus the cost of waiting consoles shows that for a practical minimum total cost our consoles should be in use about 10 percent of the time (idle consoles are much cheaper than waiting people). For minimum total cost, the consoles should be ready and waiting for the people. The same analysis applied to people using a computer shows that for minimum total cost the people should be ready and waiting to use the computer. Here, waiting people are much less expensive than an idle computer.

A $90-per-month phone line and console optimally used 10 percent of the time, 18 hours per month, at $10 per hour of use, costs a total of $270 per month. This seems to be a more realistic "sample cost of commercial time-sharing service" than $2000 to $3000 per console per month estimated by Mathews. The total cost of a console and service is 10 to 15 percent of the cost of *one* of the people using it.

For some of the larger jobs that require from 1 to 2 months of my time to analyze the problem, program and debug it, and get results—I have found little difference in cost, my time, or elapsed time between doing the job on time sharing or on the batch computer downstairs. The bottleneck on these relatively large jobs appears to be me, and not the computer. This experience seems to agree with Mathews' statement that consoles have little to offer in programs which are complex, large, and long.

But I encounter many equally important technical problems which take only an hour to a day of my time to solve with time sharing. These may require a new short program or a modification of an old large program. In pretime-sharing days I could not use a computer to help solve these smaller problems. I've never been able to get any job programmed, debugged, and run in less than a week or two using a batch computer, even with fairly good priorities on computer time. Here the computer, or rather getting to it, appears to be the bottleneck.

I could rarely afford to wait a week or two to get a problem solved, so I would have to use some faster, but less adequate, noncomputer solution method. With time sharing, I can get an hour's work done in an hour of elapsed time and get on with the next step of an overall job. I couldn't do this before, so I feel that time sharing is inexpensive and often the only practical way of using computers to help solve many technical problems.

HARRY N. CANTRELL
General Electric Company, Phoenix, Arizona 85029