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Letter From The Editor

ON THE COVER this week we depict one of our ancient glories about which too many of us are prone to find vicarious satisfaction in gloating about the greatness of Sri Lanka in the days gone by. We also delight in inveigling tourists and others to look upon the "wonders" of our ancient past—in the hope that some of the visitors are persuaded to believe that contemporary Sri Lanka was on the verge of a breakthrough to the exalted grandeur of her past. Whether this awesome majesty of the past is real, or mythical, or exaggerated, or romanticised self-glorification or just plain self-delusion is a matter for the historians who are able to achieve detachment from emotional jingoism, but the *Tribune* is (and has always been concerned) with the hard realities of the contemporary present. And the realities of the fast deteriorating conditions in the island today have begun to overpower even the most optimistic. In spite of all the tall talk of radical reforms and the march to socialism, there is general impoverishment of the mass of the population through a total devaluation of real wages and inflated prices—and the arrogant opulence of a few CRA types and the six-sri car riding officials only tends to increase the frustrations and tensions that undermine socio-political stability in the country. One very good example of the degeneration that is slowly creeping upon Sri Lanka is the state of our University education. The events in Peradeniya where the Police had resorted to firing (with one student killed and several injured) on November 11 and 12 (and thereafter) is only the beginning of the final collapse of university education as envisaged by Minister Mahmud. The Government has now appointed a Commission of Inquiry to inquire into the Police firing, but whether the Commission can undo the damage done to the reputation of the Government is doubtful. It is useful to recall some of the more recent happenings in the University of Sri Lanka with its six campuses. On November 3 the University Teachers staged a (token) strike against the Amending Bill. This was the first ever strike of University Teachers and it proved to be a remarkable success. It also marked a significant escalation of the campaign against the increasing inroads of governments into university affairs since Mr. Iriyagolle began ten years ago to bring the universities under the heel of the Ministry of Education. The latest Amending Bill was designed to crush all opposition and divert and convert universities into appendages of Malay Street through satraps of the Minister pitchforked into office as Vice-Chancellors, Presidents, Deans, Registrars and Additional Registrars! This sudden move on the eve of an election was thwarted by a vociferous opposition in the National State Assembly during the abortive debate (postponed *sine die*), the united strike action of all employees' associations and students on the six campuses, and the resolute action of the university teachers culminating in the teachers strike on November 3. The University of Ceylon Teachers Association (UCTA) at Peradeniya had, immediately after November 3, decided to form a front with other associations (of students and non-academic employees) on the Peradeniya Campus, and to develop this further into an all-University front by soliciting co-operation with similar bodies on other campuses. Interviews with the Prime Minister and the Minister of Education were also requested to place their considered views regarding the basic features of university legislation in consonance with the proposals of the consistent stand the university teachers have adopted since their opposition to the University of Ceylon Act of 1972, under the transitional provisions of which university teachers and students have suffered for nearly six years. The Amending Bill only sought to perpetuate these totalitarian measures and elevate them even further. *Tribune*, it will be recalled, had published, in full, the long statement of the University Teachers of October 31, 1975 in its columns last year. The attempt made last year to secure the adoption of the Amending Bill by the NSA had failed mainly through a series of fortuitous circumstances. At that time, responsible opinion had pointed out the suicidal dangers of the Act of 1972 and the Amending Bill; and, there were official hints that some suitable amendments would be introduced. But, it is difficult (and impossible) to amend an Act which is inherently bad in concept mechanics and operation, and that is probably why the Amending Bill introduced was the same old one without a change in any particular. Its fate, in the form it was presented, was predictable, but what will happen now is perplexing, especially after the tragic events of November 11 and 12. The Government should sit up, scrap the Act of 1972 (sending the Minister and his Malay Street minions into retirement), and re-organise the University on proper lines.

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CONTENTS

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

—Peradeniya p. 2

SRI LANKA CHRONICLE

—Oct. 28—Nov. 4 p. 4

INTERNATIONAL DIARY

—Oct. 28—Nov. 4 p. 7

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

—Carter, Thailand &
The Non-aligned P. 10

POLITICAL EARTHQUAKE IN PEKING-3

—How Hua Did It? p. 13

VILLAGE HOUSE—98

—Rain In Vanni p. 17

CONFIDENTIALLY

—SLBC P. 20

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

Peradeniya

THE EVENTS which on November 11 and 12 overwhelmed the complacency that the Malay Street politico-bureaucrats had always displayed to the developments at Peradeniya Campus (and other Campuses) continue to be the talk of the country. There has been a continuing outcry against police callousness and brutality—and there is a common saying now gaining currency that if one wishes to “commit suicide” or enter the kingdom to come one has only to enter a police station and say “boo” to one of the new version of the cop of the era of the common man. This question of police inhumanity is a one which is likely to influence a great many voters in the coming elections whenever it is held—and if any attempt is made to postpone the elections, on this score, the consequences are not predictable.

The events of the Black Friday (November 12) in Peradeniya has cast a dark shadow over the Government: and, whatever charisma it had acquired as a result of the nonaligned summit has disappeared with the winds that are now blowing across the country from “low-pressure depressions” in the adjoining seas and oceans. A leading academic of the Peradeniya Campus—let us use the *nome-de-plume* **OUTRAGED ACADEMIC** for convenience—wrote to *Tribune* at 9.30 pm on the night of November 12. The letter is worthy of record. This is what the academic said:

‘I have just returned home after three hours in the Kandy Hospital inspecting, with outraged colleagues, the results of the police brutality and carnage on the beautiful green campus, bedevilled in the last five years by the Ministry of Education politicking. The blood of young Wijesooriya from the village of Uhumiya lies on the head of the Minister and picked lackey P. W. Vitanage, the President of this Campus; and the bloody episode on a picturesque misty morning in the vale of Peradeniya when the police opened fire without warning on a crowd of defenceless strikers and students is the most savage indictment of the University Act of 1972 and

its transitional provisions. Licks and hirelings of the Minister were appointed Vice-Chancellor and Registrars, and the Campus had no option but to accommodate themselves to these puppets dangling at the end of a beringed Malay Street Grand Vizier. In the normal democratic process of an election these functionaries, blessed with neither superior administrative experience, intellectual calibre, nor academic lustre, would not have been even in the reckoning. Thrust into the unfamiliar exercise of power, and backed by a coterie in Senate House and/or a Mafia in Malay Street, they proceeded on their obnoxious courses, playing the game not by the rules of intellectual freedom and university autonomy, but by the manipulation of authoritarian procedures and the spawning of private elites around them. The case of President Vitanage, is, without any doubt, the most glaring and the spectacular model of such behaviour, and in his last days he was merely preserved in power by the irresponsible dictates of a Minister and his cronies in Malay Street, and in the corridors of power (upstairs and downstairs). The ordeal from which we suffered at his hands, particularly in the last year and more disgustingly in the last three months, has now ended in this ghastly police exercise of now familiar terrorism. The cold corpse of the young first-year undergraduate with a bullet through his vitals is the latest memorial to a government's barbarism towards the youth, and its continuing refusal to accept the lessons of April 1971. The fifty odd men and women who lie nursing their wounds, ranging from cracked skulls, bullet ruptures, lacerations, contusions and sundry bruises, survive to tell the tale. The true story of the tragic finale to the sordid and inglorious Vitanage Presidency will never be told in the national press which engaged itself in a devious cover up of the facts from the beginning. The latest Police action with the concurrence of the Ministry of Education and “its favourite son” in Peradeniya has seriously embarrassed the Government and its attempts to woo the Youth. With an election looming close, it is far more damaging than any affronts Iriyagolle offered the university community before 1970.

This is only one of several reports we have received from the Peradeniya Campus. Last year we had spotlighted the affairs to the campus and had stated in no uncertain terms that, unless the Minister and his bureaucratic cronies like Udagama were removed from office together with the University Act, 1972 (mere amendments cannot make any difference), there was danger ahead. We had recently watched the events unfolding themselves under the inept, incompetent, arrogant and power-drunk administration of President Vitanage without even entering into the arena of comment—we did not have the space. Now we cannot rest content by saying “we told you so.”

The *Daily Mirror* in recent weeks has endeavoured to spotlight the gathering storm at Peradeniya, but *Lake House* was complacently satisfied that all was well with University administration. And now, *Lake House* spreads headlines that a COMMISSION OF INQUIRY had been set up, but is doing everything possible to play down the true realities that must be spotlighted. The *Daily News* of November 16 had a comforting headline **VARSIY AMENDMENT SHELVED ... MINISTER CALLS FOR FRESH PROPOSALS** in an attempt to pour oil on troubled waters, when the only way for the Government not merely to save face (before an election) and to establish a new rapport and dialogue with the Youth, is to send the Minister and his politicalised bureaucrats packing home or to political kindergarten in some place like earthquake riddled Tangshan. The University Act of 1972 must be replaced lock, stock and barrel, without attempting piecemeal amendments. Minister Badiuddin and his “catchers” will want to “save face” by seeking only amendments. This will only lead to further trouble. And the present Vice-Chancellor is the least qualified, as suggested in the *Daily News*, report to “consult academic, non-academic and student bodies of all campuses”. It will be tragic if the government continues to rely on Vice-Chancellors like Siriwardene and Secretaries like Udagama.

The MP for Galle, Mr. W. Dahanayake, has voiced public sentiment in his letter to the Prime

Minister to "remove Buddy, Tudawe and Udagama from office" (Daily Mirror headline, 16/11/76).

The MP for Galle, Dr. W. Dahanayake a former Minister of Education, has asked the Prime Minister to remove from office the Minister of Education Al Haj Df. Badiuddin Mahmud, the Deputy Minister of Education, Mr. B. Y. Tudawe and the Secretary to the Ministry of Education, Dr. Premadasa Udagama. Dr. Dahanayake in a letter to the Prime Minister says:

"Next to the 1971 Insurrection, this country's greatest tragedy during your present regime is the shooting at the Peradeniya Campus on the 12th instant. I think, as head of the government you should order a full probe into the causes that led to this tragedy, and the justification or otherwise for the shooting, and also take steps to prevent such occurrences in the future. The probe should include a consideration of who should accept responsibility for the tragedy, and what compensation should be paid to the parents of the deceased.

"As a member of the National State Assembly I wish to tell you straightaway that from my knowledge of the background to this tragedy, I unhesitatingly point the finger of responsibility and moral guilt at the Minister of Education, the Deputy Minister of Education and the Secretary to the Minister of Education.

I think that all three of them should be removed from office, if you wish to have better relations with the university student in future."

But, Lake House, even after Black Friday, wants to save the miscreants. In an editorial entitled *The Campus Events* on November 16, the Daily News endeavoured to "present" the facts in a way to make the readers feel that the government was doing everything to clear up the situation that had arisen. The Daily News recital is really to find "scapegoats" among "selfish opponents" of the government who wished to cause trouble. It persists in the Malay Street myth that Vitanage was a "strong President" (no names mentioned) and that there were elements who wanted him removed to have a "weak" administration. This is what the Daily News said:

We welcome the Government's decision to appoint a commission

to inquire into the violent sequel to the confrontation that has been going on for several months between the campus authorities at Peradeniya and the non-academic employees and students. The death of a student and serious injury to several other students as a result of police shooting on Friday is a matter that has caused great concern to the nation as a whole. The acting Prime Minister did not waste any time in visiting the injured students in hospital to express the government's sorrow over the event. He also visited the Peradeniya campus and his visit was followed by a mission undertaken by two Ministers to hold a dialogue with the students and other members of the Peradeniya community. In deciding to appoint a Commission, the Ministers have shown that all aspects of this regrettable event will be brought to light so that those who are responsible in any way for it will be suitably dealt with and those underlying causes which precipitated these events remedied as far as possible. There is also a magisterial inquiry now going on, which requires that no comments be made regarding the details of the actual incidents. The wider problem of the ongoing confrontation between the then President and the non-academic employees was however a matter which had to be resolved in the public interest. It is a fact that the government was faced with a dilemma of ensuring, on the one hand, that the administration of the campus functioned smoothly, and of resisting on the other hand any agitation for the removal of the president if it was inspired by the selfish motives of those individuals who were in a position to benefit from a weak administration. In past years, Peradeniya has thrown off a succession of administrative heads after a short struggle by the incumbent to get things under control. It can be surmised that under such conditions, the day to day aspects of the financial and other aspects of administering a residential campus deteriorated.

After preaching this sermon, which nobody will take seriously, the same editorial went on to offer "solutions". They speak for themselves. They contribute a clumsy and devious effort to "save" the Minister (who cannot any longer

be saved) and his politicised bureaucrats (whose NCGE system of education will soon boomerang on the government in the same way). For the record we cite this part of the editorial also.

The need of the hour therefore is for everyone in the country to exercise restraint and to allow the government to show that it will handle the situation with determination and fairplay. The role of the police, the campus authorities, the employees and the students can only be brought to light through a patient and systematic inquiry. The government cannot leave any doubts that may lurk in the minds of the students and the people of the country unresolved. All facts must be brought before the commissioners who are to be appointed any time now. If political parties seek to alert the student community to basic political issues through public lectures and seminars, it can be considered a justifiable and in fact a necessary function in a democratic society. But the unfortunate incident at the campus should not be allowed to become a form of political agitation but rather a matter for everyone to be concerned about the future of university education itself especially the kind that the founding fathers conceived for a residential university like Peradeniya.

It is already clear that numerous organisations and trade unions, not to speak of political parties, are trying to complicate the situation and to make political capital out of it. It must be remembered, however, that whatever said and done it is the present government that has been most concerned about the welfare of the youth of this country. The tragic confrontation at the Peradeniya campus should be looked upon as an opportunity to completely review priorities including such matters as the amendments to the University Bill and set the course of university education right. Such matters as decentralisation, student and employee representation in the university councils can be taken up again. But these can be sanely debated if the gentlemen preparing to make political capital of the misery of students are firmly kept out.

The final sermon advising "trouble makers" to keep out and

not to "stir up anti-government sentiments has a touch of the Dullesian witchhunt which has been abandoned even in the USA itself. The Daily News has only not used the word "red" to label the "trouble makers", but the logic is clear.

It was refreshing to read the editorial in the Daily Mirror on November 16 under the heading SMOKESCREEN, WHITEWASH AND BOOMERANG.

Why, in heaven's name, didn't the Education Minister do on Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday what he finally did on 'black' Friday? Did he have to wait till a student was killed and nearly 50 others injured to appoint a Competent Authority in place of Peradeniya's utterly unpopular President? The conclusions reached by his own Committee of inquiry were as loud and clear as a bell. In Para 23, the Premawardena Committee said: "In these circumstances we are constrained to state that we find it difficult to envisage a situation in which Professor Vithanage could continue to function in his office as President any longer with acceptance to the employees who form a very important section of the commu-

nity in the campus." Though loud and clear, the Minister did not get the message. We are not surprised. When a fortnight ago, the Minister beat a sensible, if somewhat undignified, retreat from his University Bill, the Opposition was convinced that he was totally unaware of some of the clauses in his own Bill. Given such intellectual innocence, it is possible that the Minister did not study too carefully or comprehend clearly the considered judgement of his own Committee. If this was not the case and the Minister was ill or otherwise incapacitated, surely it was the duty of his two senior advisers, Dr. Udagama and Mr. Paskaralingam, to draw his attention to the bluntly stated counsel of the Inquiry Committee?

Far from heeding that advice and de-fusing a situation which this newspaper had described as "dangerous and potentially explosive," the Ministry let matters slide. And this was done under cover of a propaganda smokescreen. The public and the Government were suddenly subjected to a publicity build-up which sought to project the immaculate image of an unfortunate hapless, besieged Presi-

dent who had somehow attracted unpopularity to himself by his tough, clean-up campaign. Not for the first time, an administration fell victim to its own propaganda and the inspired attempts to divert, confuse and white-wash. The Times group of newspapers which did not participate in this diversionary publicity campaign nor allow its own judgement to be clouded by the thick puffs of propagandist smoke spread loose in other places, wishes to reserve judgement on other issues until the proposed Commission of Inquiry completes its work. To change the metaphor, the diversionary tactics boomeranged.

Meanwhile, we commend the speed with which the Government acted in de-fusing a tense situation, the sympathy and understanding with which the acting head of the Government and two Ministers responded to the needs of those who suffered, and the Government's prompt decision to appoint a Commission of Inquiry.

Any attempt now to save Minister Badiuddin and others responsible for the mess in University education (and also primary and secondary education) will boomerang on the Government at the next elections.

SRI LANKA CHRONICLE

Oct. 28 — Nov. 4

A DIARY OF EVENTS IN SRI LANKA AND THE WORLD
COMPILED FROM DAILY NEWSPAPERS
PUBLISHED IN COLOMBO.

CDN—Ceylon Daily News; CDM—Ceylon Daily Mirror;
CO—Ceylon Observer; ST—Sunday Times; DM—Dina-
mina; LD—Lankadipa; VK—Virakesari; ATH—Aththa;
SM—Silumina; SLD—Sri Lankadipa.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 28: The Ministry of Health announced yesterday that the number of patients being turned away from state hospitals hit by the GMOA's work-to-rule has shown a marked decline: according to the Ministry this was a direct result of a number of senior consultants volunteering to work longer hours examining patients in clinics at bigger hospitals: a group of patients in the Colombo General Hospital who were turned away as there wasn't a doctor to attend to them stormed the office of the Medical Superintendent and demanded treatment: the Superintendent made hurried arrangements to have a doctor when the group became restive: Ministers met yesterday to discuss the situation caused by the work-to-rule campaign: the GMOA and the AMS yesterday denied the statement by the Minister of Health that action has been taken on 11 of the 13 demands submitted by the doctors:

the presidents of both unions said only 2 demands were granted: the Government spends Rs. 61,000 on a doctor to educate him from the time he enters the medical college as a student until he passes out as a doctor—CDN. According to the Daily Mirror medical specialists in out stations will stop the channelled consultation practice from today and only non-paying patients will be attended to at government hospitals and dispensaries: the unions of doctors feel that it is unfair to discriminate between the privileged and the poor at a time when they are launching the work-to-rule campaign. Mr. Ronnie de Mel, UNP MP for Devinuwara, speaking on the University Amendment Bill in the National State Assembly yesterday said this is the worst Bill ever presented by this government in the NSA: he further said the Bill is designed to empower the Minister to have his own men in positions in the future—VK. Air Ceylon and Air Siam will start a joint service on the route Bangkok Colombo-Zurich-Paris from November 6—CDM. The LSSP controlled Ceylon Federation of Labour has written to the Prime Minister to intervene in the Government Press dispute and bring a settlement to enable the workers to continue in employment—CDM. Aththa in its editorial criticised the government papers for inciting the doctors against the government and branding them as "reactionaries" and "capitalists": the paper further said doctors cannot be compared to the normal workers and in view of the privileges enjoyed by executives in other government sectors the demands by doctors are very reasonable.

the paper wanted the government to interfere in this and bring about a settlement. The Ministry of Public Administration and Home Affairs decided to give more marks for applicants with the maximum age when selections are made for government vacancies by the computer system—LD.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 29: According to the *Daily News* there is growing disenchantment among the rank and file of the GMOA and the AMS on the present work-to-rule campaign because some of them feel that the campaign is not receiving public sympathy or support: the paper further said some doctors have resigned from the Associations of which they were members for a considerable long period: meanwhile Mrs. Siva Obeyesekera, Minister of Health, said yesterday that the Ministry of Health will not have discussions with the doctors until they resume normal working: to-day is the fifth day of the work-to-rule campaign—CDN. Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, in a statement issued yesterday expressed happiness at the UN resolution rejecting the declaration of so-called independence of Transkei and declaring it invalid—CDN. Mr. M. Thiruchelvam, QC arguing before the five-judge Bench in the TULF case said the National State Assembly is the only powerful body which can enact laws and asked whether a case can be filed against MPs of the National State Assembly under invalid emergency laws framed by the President without the permission of the National State Assembly: Mr. Thiruchelvam further stated that in the Trial-at-Bar he took up the position that the Constitution was not valid but now he is arguing on the basis that the Constitution was legal—VK. Speaking in a seminar organised by the Sri Lanka branch of the UN on the minority communities and their problems Mr. Ronie de Mel' UNP MP for Devinuwara said the problems of the Tamils cannot be solved by the government having discussions with "Colombo 7" Tamils: he further said the problems of the Tamil speaking people could be solved only by having discussions with the elected representatives of the Tamils—VK. According to the *Virakesari* the Prime Minister will call the GMOA and the AMS representatives for a discussion in a bid to solve the problem created by the doctors work-to-rule campaign: the discussions might take place next week: Mr. S. S. Kuttalleke, Minister for Social Services, has instructed the Department of Probation and Child Care Services, to stop giving children to foreigners for adoption until a committee appointed to probe this submits its report—DM.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 30: Instructions have gone out to all government agents to cancel the licenses of traders who violate any provision of the Emergency (Control of Trade) Regulations: Ministry of Trade has instructed the Government Agents to withdraw the licenses of such traders immediately without asking for advice from the Competent Authority of the Ministry of Trade—CDN. Following reports of increased absenteeism by doctors the Ministry of Health yesterday cancelled all leave for medical officers invoking the Essential Services Act: a Health Ministry spokesman said that doctors will not be given leave unless supported by medical certificates—CDN. Sri Lanka and the United States yesterday signed an agreement under PL 480 for the sale of 100,000 metric tons of wheat flour and 20,000 tons of rice for Sri Lanka—CDN. Sri Lanka yesterday signed an agreement in Colombo with West

Germany for a commodity loan of DM 6,500,000 on soft terms interest of three-quarters of one per cent per annum repayable in 50 years—CDN. The GMOA and The AMS yesterday said that it would consider a suspension of the work-to-rule if the Minister of Health is willing to give an early deadline for positive decisions on salary anomalies, payment for "on call" and "week-end duties", official traveling assessed, rent for quarters and channelled consultation practice—CDM. Mr. S. Thondaman, President of the Ceylon Workers Congress and one of the leaders of the TULF speaking on minority problems on a UN sponsored seminar said neither the UNP nor the SLFP has given any benefits to the minorities: Mr. Thondaman further said of the two the SLFP was more frank, outspoken and did not mince their words while the UNP was more subtle in their dealings and one could never predict what surprises were in store—CDM. Professor, P. W. Vithanage, President of the Peradeniya Campus, in a statement to the Press said that certain forces were working against him and wanted him removed from the Campus because since he took over the administration of the Campus he has done so much to bring to light corrupt practices involving thefts, forgeries etc: he further said he must be given full powers and he would bring out more underhand activities that are going on in the Campus—DM. *Lankadipa* posed the question as to what happened to the Commission appointed to probe the working of the State Gem Corporation after the Chairman of the Commission, Justice Mr. L. B. De Silva died.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 31: Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, addressing a public meeting in Nittambuwa yesterday said she would not give into strong arm tactics: she further said "...if any group is under the impression that they could hold a sword over us and get their demands they are sadly mistaken....."—CO. Private doctors in the city and outstations are having good business owing to the work-to-rule campaign launched by government doctors—CO. Stocks of oxygen in government hospitals are running out owing to a strike in the manufacturing firm—CO. All staff, students and employees of the six campuses of the University will come out on a day's token strike tomorrow in protest against the University Amendment Bill which has come before the Parliament now—ST. According to the *Sunday Times* which quoted government sources the work-to-rule campaign is on the verge of collapse: the *Times* said the Prime Minister told a meeting at Attanagalle yesterday that the people of the country supported the firm stand of the Government in regard to the work-to-rule campaign launched by doctors. Mr. G. G. Ponnambalam Q.C., left for Madras yesterday to appear for Mr. Karunanidhi, former Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, in a bribery case filed against him in Madras—VK. Police decided to prosecute footboard travellers in buses from tomorrow—VK. According to the *Lankadipa* the government is considering a proposal to increase the quantity of sugar given on rations and to reduce the price of rice: the paper further said the Government is also considering a price reduction for off ration sugar—SLD. According to the *Sri Lankadipa* Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, referring to the doctors work-to-rule campaign told a meeting in Attanagalle yesterday that if the doctors continue to launch the campaign she would be compelled to take measures the Indian

Prime Minister has adopted in her country. About 6.8 million, nearly half the country's population, will be eligible to vote at the next elections according to the new electoral registers—CO. According to the *Sunday Observer* giving children for adoption to foreigners was going non-stop despite an order by the Minister of Social Services, Mr. S. S. Kulatilake, to stop this practice until a committee appointed by him to investigate this submits its report.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 1: The work-to-rule campaign launched by the GMOA and the AMS entered its eighth day today with no sign of any settlement: both the unions and the Ministry of Health stood by their earlier decisions—CDN. West Germany has gifted 11,650 tons of fertiliser worth Rs. 10,107,423 to Sri Lanka: the gift was handed over last week at the Colombo port—CDN. Mr. M. Thiruchelvam, Q.C., one of the leaders of the Tamil Liberation United Front will soon leave for Madras to join Mr. G. G. Ponnambalam, Q.C., to appear for Mr. M. Karunanidhi, former Chief Minister of Tamilnadu, who has been charged for bribery by the Indian Government—CDN. According to the *Daily News* undergraduates, non-academic staff, academic staff and other employees are poised for a token strike today demanding the withdrawal of the University of Sri Lanka (Amendment) Bill. Group Captain Harry Goonetilleke will take over as Commander of the Sri Lanka Air Force today following the retirement of Commodore Pathman Mendis—CDN. The Cabinet has requested Mr. Hector Kobbekaduwa, Minister of Agriculture and Lands and Mr. Pieter Keuneman, Minister of Housing and Construction to study and report the reasons why the prices of buildable urban lands have gone up during the recent past: the Ministers have also been asked to submit proposals as to how the prices could be brought down—CDM. Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, has warned that if doctors continue their work to rule campaign inconveniencing poor patients she would be compelled to take stern measures as adopted by the Indian Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi: the Premier issued this warning addressing a public meeting held in Nittambuwa after opening a Milk collecting centre—CDM. Over 700,000 students will sit the GCE O'level and the NCGE examination commencing on December 11—CDM. According to the *Virakesari* the Tamil United Liberation Front is contemplating to change the name TULF to Tamil Liberation Organisation (T.L.O.) and to make this organisation a widespread political organisation. Mr. Anura Bandaranaike, Chief Organiser of the SLFP Youth Leagues, told a meeting in Trincomalee that he would resign from the SLFP within 24 hours if the LSSP joined the United Front once again—VK. The *Aththa* in an editorial posed the question as to why the Government should be in such a hurry to pass the University of Sri Lanka (Amendment) Bill in the Parliament despite opposition by the population of the six campuses, the Communist Party and several other prominent educationists in the country.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 2: According to the *Daily News* faulty packing of tea for export has resulted in the loss \$ 40 million (Rs. 360 million) by Sri Lanka tea industry: an inquiry held by the Ministry of Plantation Industries has revealed that five private sector firms engaged in the manufacture of tea chests have utilized their quota of aluminium foil for the manufacture of

talcum powder and biscuit tins while substituting the tea chests with metal fittings: meanwhile importers in London and shipping firms have criticised the packing of Sri Lanka tea and this has resulted in further loss to the country. Mr. K. C. F. Wijewicrema, Secretary to the Ministry of Transport, who was suddenly removed from the board of Air Ceylon in September has now placed certain "facts" before the Prime Minister and urged that a formal inquiry be ordered into the working of Air Ceylon—CDM. Mr. S. Kathirvelupillai, General Secretary of the Federal Party, and MP for Kopay, in a statement said yesterday that the TULF will not join any Opposition party on the polls issue nor will it co-operate to topple the government in the proposed civil disobedience by the UNP in the event of the general elections being postponed—CDM. Following a request by Mr. M. Thiruchelvam, Q.C., that the trial against the seven accused in the Alfred Duraipah murder case be postponed until the judgement by the five Judge Bench of the Supreme Court regarding the validity of the Emergency Regulations is given, the Trial-at-Bar appointed for the Duraipah case postponed the trial for November 29—VK. The President of the GMOA, Dr. Cooke, told the *Virakesari* yesterday that he expects the Prime Minister to hold discussions today with representatives of the GMOA and the AMS to bring about a settlement to the work-to-rule campaign by doctors in government hospitals. Only 645 Tamils and 65 Muslims were selected for teaching appointments among the 7500 graduates who were given teaching appointments from yesterday—VK. Amendments will soon be made to the existing laws governing state corporations by which the Board of Directors will be held responsible for losses sustained by the corporations—DM. The *Janadina*, official daily of the LSSP which was published again today after a lapse of a few months said in its front page lead that a high level conference of the SLFP presided by the Prime Minister was held yesterday at Temple Trees where it was discussed to whom nominations should be given for the next general elections on the SLFP ticket: the paper further said several SLFP MPs will not get party nominations for the next general elections: the paper in its editorial said the LSSP will be always with the progressive section of the public and will work hard to defeat the UNP and the reactionary section of the SLFP.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 3: Dr. Badiuddin Mahmud, Minister of Education, yesterday announced in Parliament that he has decided to postpone the debate on the University of Sri Lanka (Amendment) Bill: it is understood that the Bill will be reconsidered and certain amendments made before it is reintroduced in the Parliament—ATH. *Aththa* in an editorial praised the decision of the Minister of Education to postpone the University of Sri Lanka (Amendment) Bill and said it is a victory for the progressives. Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike, Minister of Finance, will present the last budget of this government's term of office to the National State Assembly today and according to the *Daily News* this seventh budget of the Government is likely to bring many relief measures to the masses of the country. Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, in a message to the meeting of the Club of Rome held in Algiers last week said "the world cannot continue to sustain the present division of poverty and affluence, we have to devise a system which is more equitable

and fair to the deprived peoples of this planet". The Ministry of Local Government disclosed yesterday that it has been decided to obtain World Bank aid to solve the city's water problem—CDM. The weekly Cabinet meeting scheduled for today will take up the question of the work to rule campaign launched by doctors in government hospitals: the campaign enters its 10th day today—VK. Dr. Rienzie Peiris, President of the Government Medical Officers Association, told the *Lankadipa* yesterday that the work to rule campaign launched by doctors of government hospitals had been a complete success. The *Janadina* requested the Prime Minister to take action against some top bureaucrats of the State Building Materials Corporation whom the paper alleged had swindled Rs. 1.5 million by the misappropriation of 95,000 bags of cement: the paper recalled a recent statement by the Prime Minister that she would not hesitate to drive out any top official who resorts to fraud at the expense of the suffering masses. Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, will leave for Malaysia, Philippines and Japan on November 5 and she is expected to have talks on economic affairs with the leaders of these countries: the Prime Minister's trip to these countries will end on November 18—DM.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 4: Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike, Minister of Finance, announcing the government's seventh budget in the National State Assembly yesterday said all foreign banks in Sri Lanka which are not nationalised in their own countries will be nationalised. Mr. Bandaranaike also announced that the price of flour has been reduced by 5 cents and the price of bread by 5 cents: the quantity of sugar issued on ration as been increased from the present three-quarter pound to one pound at the rate of 72 cents per pound: other measures announced by the Minister were the importation of textiles to ease the shortage in the country, the interest accrued by Sri Lankans who operate accounts in local banks with foreign currencies to be exempted from income tax: concluding his budget speech Mr. Bandaranaike said "last year I hoped that all of you would want to wish me many happy returns to office, in this election year, with the gifts in this year's budget and last year's budget, may I take the opportunity to wish you all many happy returns"—CDM & CDN. According to the *Daily Mirror* the Government decided to strictly enforce the rule that Secretaries to Ministries cannot hold office in corporations as Chairman. According to the *Daily News* financiers, businessmen, executives of tobacco companies and ordinary masses welcomed the budget of Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike because taxes remained the same and there was no additional burden on the common masses and the price of flour has been brought down and the quantity of ration sugar increased: according to the *Virakesari* the Opposition is of view that the people who expected large measures of relief from this budget were deceived as there was no significant measure of relief to the common man: According to the *Dinamina* the budget will help the people to reduce the cost of living to some extent: the *Aththa* headlined the nationalisation of foreign banks in its reportage of the budget: The *Janadina* described the budget as "an empty one from an empty man": in the paper further said the Minister has become the target of criticism not only from the Opposition but even from his own ranks in the government. A large quantity of tetracycline capsules valued at Rs. 30,000 was nabbed

by policemen when it was brought from the premises of the Colombo general Hospital—CDM.

INTERNATIONAL DIARY

Oct. 28 - Nov. 4

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 28: Nigerian Ambassador to the United Nations, Mr. Leslie Harriman, read in the General Assembly a resolution rejecting the declaration of independence for the Transkei and declaring it invalid: the proposal read by Mr. Harriman called upon all governments to deny any form of recognition to Transkei and to have no dealings with any authorities there: the General Assembly is expected to adopt the resolution with a large majority, perhaps unanimously. Chinese Red Guards openly pledged support for the new Chairman, Mr. Hua Kuo-feng and condemned the anti-party clique now detained by the Government: a top-ranking Peking official said yesterday that the Government has still not decided about the future of the four radicals including the wife of former Chairman Mao Tse-tung: the official further said the fate of the four will be decided when the Central Committee meeting takes place. British Foreign Secretary, Mr. Anthony Crosland, emphasised yesterday in London an agreement would be possible on the future of Rhodesia at the Geneva conference despite press reports that the conference would fail: quoting reports from Mr. Ivor Richard, the Chairman of the Geneva conference on Rhodesia, Mr. Crosland said that he was "not at all downcast" about the chances of the success. At the Arab League summit held in Cairo four countries Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates and Qatar had agreed to contribute 65 per cent of the costs of the peace keeping force in Lebanon: the balance 35 per cent would be met by voluntary contributions from other countries. South African Prime Minister, John Vorster, said that he had banned the chief correspondent of the American magazine, *Newsweek*, Mr. Arnaud de Borchgrave, from visiting South Africa. President Idi Amin of Uganda has sent two of his sons to an institution for delinquent children so they can learn useful things, according to the Ugandan Radio: the Radio did not mention the nature of the boys' misbehaviour or their ages. The Irish Republican Government fixed November 24 as the date of general elections and observers in Dublin indicated a crashing defeat for the ruling coalition government.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 29: The General Assembly of the United Nations without a single division adopted the resolution rejecting the declaration of so-called independence of Transkei and declared it invalid. China rejected congratulatory messages received from Soviet bloc communist parties on the appointment of Mr. Hua Kuo-feng as Chairman of the Communist Party: Soviet Union, East Germany, Poland, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia and Mongolia were the countries whose congratulatory messages were rejected and returned, according to a Government spokesman in Peking. A spokesman for Bishop Abdel Muzorewa, one of the black African leaders at the Geneva conference, handed a 10-point document at a press con-

ference in which the Rhodesian Prime Minister, Ian Smith has been accused of perpetrating a "gigantic fraud" at talks in Geneva while striking to keep power in the hands of the whites; the conference is scheduled to begin today. The Soviet Union announced a cut in its declared defence spending next year: the Minister of Finance who presented the budget announced the defence budget would be 17,200 million roubles, a drop of 200 million roubles. Following a ruling by the American Supreme Court that the Watergate tapes are no longer confidential certain firms of disc producers have planned to bring the tapes out on records: the tapes contain conversations between the President and his aides which were used as evidence against former President Nixon. According to a latest opinion-poll conducted in New Orleans, USA, Mr. Jimmy Carter, the Democratic Party candidate for the November Presidential elections has a lead between 3 and 6 per cent over his Republican candidate, President Ford. Prime Minister Yitshak Rabin of Israel told Parliament yesterday that he had refused to meet a delegation of Christian villagers from Southern Lebanon: the villagers wrote to the Prime Minister to protect them from would be reprisals from left-wingers.

years: the elections due last June were already postponed and the term of the government extended from five to six years. Black nationalist leader Joshua Nkomo told the Geneva conference on Rhodesia that black Rhodesians did not intend to exact revenge on white settlers when they took over power in the breakthrough British colony: in a major policy speech Mr. Nkomo said "any settler who chooses to be a Zimbabwean shall be as much a citizen as any other and it is not our intention to substitute one form of evil by another". Following a report by the Pakistani Attorney General the Pakistani Government decided to sever all connections with the Amnesty International: the Attorney General said the AI is not the non-political organisation it claims to be but dishonest, malicious and mischievously attempted to mislead the world and malign Pakistan and its highest court. Former Ministry leader of Israel, Moshe Dayan, said the government should send troops into Southern Lebanon to prevent Palestinian guerrillas moving there in strength. Prime Minister Takeo Miki has won another round in his fight to stay in power with a decision to postpone a special convention of Japan's liberal Democratic Party (LDP) until after general elections in December.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 30: According to African Nationalist sources a dispute about Britain's role in the Geneva conference on Rhodesia made the conference begin two hours later but it was adjourned after meeting for 30 minutes: the British Chairman, Mr. Ivor Richard, reported deep suspicion between the two sides negotiating to end the White rule in the former British colony of Rhodesia, the conference will be held again today: at yesterday's meeting the Chairman read a message from Prime Minister James Callaghan of Britain. Israel Army's Chief of Staff, Lt. General Mordechai Gur, said that the Arab Peace-keeping forces in Lebanon could be a military danger to the Jewish State: General Gur was referring to the 30,000-man strong forces the Arab League has planned to position in Lebanon to cement the ceasefire in Lebanon and finally end the 18-month civil war. Vietnam yesterday accused Thailand of violating the joint communique establishing diplomatic relations between the two countries: Hanoi Radio said the Thai Government was arresting and imprisoning innocent Vietnamese residents in Thailand. Japan yesterday announced its capability of arresting a small scale aggression of a conventional type without outside help. Egypt went into general elections yesterday for the first time in 25 years: the 1600 candidates grouped as left, right and centre are all within the Arab Socialist Union, the only political party in Egypt. The headquarters of the International Police Organisation in Paris, the Interpol, was rocked in yesterday after a bomb blast, the bomb planted in the garden of the premises was claimed to have been planted by a group describing themselves as Spanish "deportees": considerable damage to the outside of the building was caused as a result of the explosion.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 31: It was announced in the Indian Parliament yesterday that the general election have been postponed till March 1978: Law Minister, Hari Ram Gokhale, announced that the term of the present Parliament will be extended from six to seven

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 1: The Indian Government yesterday postponed the general elections till March 1978: Law Minister, Hariram Gokhale, told the Lower House yesterday that the time was not ripe for general elections and announced the postponement until 1978 under the Emergency. South African Prime Minister, Mr. John Vorster, warned that the Geneva Conference on Rhodesia may fail if the black African nationalist leaders reject the Kissinger proposal on constitutional agreement: Mr. Vorster said this at a meeting of his ruling National Party. Final opinion polls conducted by the New York Times and the CBS television network said Mr. Jimmy Carter of the Democratic Party is still ahead with a slight majority over his Republican rival President Ford: the polls further indicated that the President is quickly closing behind his democratic rival. Vietnam News Agency reported that Vietnam and Sao Tome and Principe have agreed to establish diplomatic relations at Ambassadorial level. Radio Peking reported yesterday that three of the four radicals arrested by the government have been sacked from the top posts they were holding in the Shanghai administration: Vice Premier Chang Chun-chiao, Vice Chairman of the Communist Party, Wang Hung-wen, and Politburo member Yao Wen-yuan have been replaced by three outsiders: meanwhile Revolutionary Committee Vice Chairman Ma Tien-shui, who was accused in recent Shanghai wall posters of siding with the radicals and trying to take over the city by force was reported to be still in office. Belgian Prime Minister Leo Tindeman told a meeting of the European Economic Community Foreign Ministers meeting to play an active role to rescue the pound sterling: Mr. Tindeman did not specify the areas in which EEC actions should be concentrated. The Indian Ministry of Health and Family Planning has finalised a scheme which will enable the Indian system of ayurveda medicine to play an important role in the national health program.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 2: Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto of Pakistan will tour the North West Frontier province of his country where hill tribes are

reported to be engaged in bloody battles with the troops: at least 250 people are reported killed: For the first time Dacca, capital of Bangladesh, and Pakistan were linked by staellite. Libyan leader, Colonel Muammar Gaddafi, has ordered the release of all Egyptians held in detention in his country in an effort to improve relations between the two countries: Colonel Gaddafi said that he wanted a settlement for all outstanding problems between the two countries and he did not want any conditions imposed for settling these problems: he further said he looked forward to a private meeting with Egyptian President Anwar Sadat. Wall posters appeared in Shanghai province in China naming Mr. Li Hsien-nien, a political moderate, as China's new Prime Minister: the posters indicated that Defence Minister Yeh Chien-ying has been nominated Chairman of the National People's Congress. According to a document distributed at the Geneva Conference on Rhodesia by African Nationalist leader, Joshua Nkomo, the white politicians were prepared to use the two-year interim period envisaged before majority rule to revive the economy and to build up arms supplies and troops: the document further said that if the agreed constitution was not liked after two years, parliament could reject it and it may not be dissolved, with the distribution of this document mistrust deepened between Rhodesia's ruling white politicians and the African nationalist leaders gathered in Geneva to decide the future of Rhodesia. The Shah of Iran said in an interview published in Bonn the price of his country's oil must be raised by at least 15 per cent: the Shah further said the purchasing power of his country has dropped by 40 per cent since the price of oil has been increased in 1974. A mission from the International Monetary Fund is on the way to London for negotiations on the British application for a loan of 3.9 billion dollars: meanwhile major industrialised countries are discussing massive rescue operation of the pound sterling.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 3: The Presidential elections of the United States of America took place yesterday and political observers all over the world predicted a very close finish between President Gerald Ford and his Democratic rival Jimmy Carter: the results are expected this evening. President Michel Micombero of Brundi was overthrown in a bloodless coup yesterday: quoting a communique from the armed forces Bujumburo Radio announced Lt. Col. Thomas Ndabemeye, Commander of the armed forces, had been stripped of all his titles and the Buumburo airport closed indefinitely: President Micombero who ruled this central African State for the last ten years is also stripped of all his functions. President of the United Nations General Assembly, Mr. Shirley Amarasinghe, said he will cancel committee meetings if delegates keep turning up late: a spokesman of the President said Mr. Amarasinghe has decided to cancel meetings of the plenary in future if there was no quorum at starting time. Vietnam accused Thailand of inviting US imperialism back to the country: official Vietnamese newspaper Nhan Dan said that the military rulers of Thailand have increased the US air force at Takali airbase and quoted the Thai Prime Minister as declaring recently "we want to co-operate shoulder-to-shoulder with the US." Rhodesian Prime Minister, Ian Smith, now in Geneva for the conference on Rhodesia told reporters that he planned to return to Rhodesia

because he has nothing to do in Geneva: Mr. Smith said he was disappointed with the progress made at the conference and might leave behind a couple of ministers. The Mozambique News Agency reported yesterday that Mozambique forces are engaged in heavy fighting with Rhodesian troops who have struck across the border in the biggest attack on Mozambique. Warring factions in Lebanon were seen yesterday engaged in bloody battles since the latest ceasefire which took effect on October 21: meanwhile, Syria warned the Rightist factions fighting in Lebanon that it will broke no opposition to Arab decisions on bringing peace to Lebanon.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 4: Democratic Party's Jimmy Carter won the Presidential elections of the United States: political observers commencing on the victory said that the political unknown a year ago won the biggest upset in US political history: he is the first President to be elected from the South of America since 1849: he will assume duties on January 20: for the first time since Richard Nixon won the Presidency in 1968 the country will be governed by a President and a Congress of the same party: the Democrats kept firm control of the Senate and the House of Representatives, which they have dominated since 1955: Senator Walter Mondale will serve as Vice President under Mr. Carter. It was confirmed in Tel Aviv that Prime Minister Yitshak Rabin of Israel will attend the congress of the Socialist International to be held in Geneva this month: he will attend in the capacity of head of Israel's Labour Party. China's official organ *People's Daily* commenting on the action program presented by the Soviet Union at the fourth United Nations Conference on Trade and Development described it as "aggressive and neo-colonialist": the charge was part of a lengthy attack by the Chinese journal on Soviet economic policies in regard to developing nations. Official sources in China said Peking rejected the congratulatory message sent by Soviet Communist Party's General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev to Mr. Hua Kuo-feng, Chairman of the Chinese Communist Party: the official explanation given for the rejection is that there are no relations between the two parties. The World Food Program (WFP) has announced a 1.4 million dollar grant in emergency food aid to Angola for displaced people within the country and for Angolans returning to their home country. In an interview published by Geneva daily *Suisse*, former French Gaullist Party leader, Alexander Sanguinetti, blasted Switzerland's confidential bank accounts system as a contributing factor in Western Europe's economic problems.

NEXT WEEK

- * BUDGET 1977
—Postmortem
- * UNIVERSITY AFFAIRS
—Bud To Worse

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

BY LANKAPUTRA

Carter, Thailand, And The Challenge To The Non-aligned

THE TOP NEWS of the fortnight was the US Presidential elections held on November 2. Although all early Gallup and other polls in the USA had indicated that Carter had established a big lead over Ford from the time he won the Democratic nomination, yet in the last ten days or so pollsters and commentators had predicted that the gap had narrowed down to the point where it was thought that Ford would edge his way to victory. A USIS press release, datelined Washington November 1, (issued in Colombo on November 2), stated **FORD TAKES LEAD IN GALLUP POLL.** For the record it would be useful to cite it:

For the first time in the long campaign for the presidency, Gerald Ford grasped the lead in a major public-opinion poll on the very eve of the election. Dr. George Gallup reported October 31 that his organization's final survey gave Mr. Ford 47 percent of the vote, Jimmy Carter 46 percent, Eugene McCarthy two percent, other "third-party" candidates one percent and the still undecided four percent.

Another leading poll-taker, Louis Harris, said October 31 that the race is "up for grabs" and too close to call. He said that Governor Carter's ranking had remained fairly stable since September, but the big change had come about because President Ford's standing had been steadily rising. He suggested that independent candidate Mr. McCarthy "could be a factor nationally" by tipping the scales in such crucial states as New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Illinois where the difference between the two major candidates is within a single percentage point. The United Press International poll taken the last week of the campaign found the popular vote a toss-up but gave Mr. Carter a large electoral vote lead, though not enough for victory. The survey gave Mr. Carter

220 electoral votes from 18 states and the District of Columbia (with 270 needed to win), Mr. Ford 108 from 16 states, and another 210 electoral votes from 16 states going either way. The wire service predicted that if the two men poll very close to each other in Illinois, Michigan and Pennsylvania, the election could end up with a very narrow margin of victory in the popular vote but a rather one-sided win in the electoral college since a simple plurality throws all of a state's electoral votes to one candidate. Finally, from Harry's New York Bar in Paris, a favourite watering spot for American expatriates, comes a poll of patrons giving Mr. Ford a narrow lead, 238 to 236. The establishment's owners claim that their straw poll has accurately reflected the winner of every US presidential election since 1924.

This final USIS news before the elections had another piece with the heading **BLACK MINISTER DENIED ADMISSION BY CARTER'S CHURCH.** This item had received wide publicity in the daily press and there was political speculation whether it would have a disastrous impact on Carter's "black vote". It was known that the vast majority of the "blacks" in the USA were voting for Carter.

(It is believed that the last minute effort of the Ford-Kissinger administration to proclaim hostility to "racialism" in Southern Africa was an attempt to create a better image for Ford among the Negro voters at home. But this gimmick, if it was one, does not seem to have had the desired effect—it is claimed that Carter had secured 94% of the Negro vote).

Apart from what looked very much a tendentious story (at least with regard to the timing) about a "black" and Carter Church, the USIS ended its release with a cautious **NECK TO NECK DOWN THE HOME STRETCH.** And, there is no doubt that it was a close fight—with Carter winning with a small majority.

The USIS news release from Washington on November 4, released in Colombo on November 5, set out the statistics about Carter's victory thus:

Democratic Candidate Jimmy Carter won election as the 39th President with a margin of three

percent of the popular vote and 27 more electoral votes than he needed. He polled 40,249,963 to 38,498,496 for his Republican rival, incumbent President Gerald Ford. Their electoral vote totals were 297 to 241. The winner earned the electoral votes of 23 States and the District of Columbia, including such big States as New York, Pennsylvania, Texas and Ohio. The loser took 27 States, but their electoral votes could not match those in the Democratic column. All 12 third-party candidates in the 1976 election together barely collected one percent of the total votes cast, almost 80 million. Former Senator Eugene McCarthy was by far the most successful. On the ballot as an independent in 29 States, he had 657,340 votes. Former Georgia Governor Lester Maddox, running on the American Independent Party, had 168,695.

THE USIS RELEASE then gave the countdown, state by state, but this would be of interest only to keen students of US election politics. But for the general reader in Sri Lanka what is important is the impact Carter's election will have on the world. While it has been generally stressed that Carter and the Democrats would, in the first instance, be more involved in domestic matters, there is no doubt that there are likely to be strong shifts in emphasis and the nuances in specific foreign policy matters.

On one matter a change is expected, a tightening of relations with the USSR with Carter moving away from detente with the USSR towards greater friendship with the "traditional allies" of the USA.

What will this mean?

While it is too premature to speculate on Carter's foreign policy postures, there are a number of matters of international urgency which will not wait until Carter "settles down" in White House with a new Secretary of State. Rhodesia, for one, cannot wait, with the Geneva Conference on the verge of aborting without even an agreement as to a date for the transfer of power to a "black majority rule". There are also greater possibilities of discord about the composition of the Cabinet. While the Geneva Conference goes on, the neighbouring Black States have decided

Thailand

to step up the guerilla war in Rhodesia. There is then the question of Israel—it may be dormant for some time longer, but the US Jewish lobby is much more powerful among the Democrats than among the Republicans.

But the most critical challenge to Carter will come from the situation in Southeast Asia centred around Thailand. With the backdrop of the Taiwan-China-USA triangle still unresolved, the anti-communist dictatorship in Thailand (with stronger anti-communist policies in Malaysia and Singapore), a new confrontation is bound to develop in the Indo-China Peninsula (of which Thailand may be said to be a part) between Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia on the one hand and the Thai-ASEAN group.

In the beginning of October, almost as the purge of the radicals began in China, a military junta took over the government in Thailand after a bloody massacre of students and other liberal-democratic elements. This is the 14th coup in less than thirty years. But this coup was different from all the previous coups: all earlier coups were of a "traditional character"—a change in the military cliques running the administration, government and especially all trade and commerce. In 1973, the "triumvirate of dragons" was toppled and a civilian democratic regime was set up. A new Constitution was drawn up and a heroic attempt was made to introduce a new way of life based on civil liberties. But this was difficult because the country had been under military dictatorships for several decades and it was an uphill task to effect any transformation. Most difficult was to root out corruption. Corruption had become a way of life and all attempts to bring big business and unconscionable profits under control was anathema to all vested interests which turned to the military to save the situation.

THAILAND had a civilian democratic rule for three troubled years. In this period, the government liquidated the US bases in Thailand, a major achievement, considering the foothold the Pentagon and the CIA had in that country for years. By July of this year, all US personnel had been evacuated from Thai soil. (And at this juncture, the Philippines had also started "negotiations" to secure the phased

withdrawal of US forces from bases in that country).

The Seni Pramoj Government that was overthrown on October 6/7 was not a communist government, not even a pro-communist one. The land reform mooted by this government was not anywhere near the "radical" land reform in India or Sri Lanka. The Pramoj Government established relations with Vietnam, but this was done with the concurrence of the ASEAN —(and other governments of the ASEAN group have also taken steps to normalise relations with Vietnam). The British *Financial Times* had characterised the Pramoj government as "conservative", and there is no doubt that it was. It had not even hinted that it would take any action against foreign capital and there was no threat to foreign investments—of which the US had a major share. Many British papers have only suggested that the "Thai crisis was engi-

neered by the USA, and the coup was the result of US military intervention". What must have troubled the Pentagon most, after the US withdrew from Thai bases, was that the Government had decided to open the Laos frontier and extend the normalisation of Thai-Vietnamese relations.

There is enough evidence that the "destabilisation" of the civilian democratic government was carried out by the Thai Generals and Colonels (who had been, until recently, part of the US war machine). The return of the former "dictator" Kittikachorn as a Buddhist monk was the signal for coup. The other members of the former triumvirate also slipped back into the country before the coup. New names have been thrust forward but the junta is drawn from the same old groups.

The coup in Thailand is no doubt a challenge to Asian

ELECTIONS

Sir,

I wish to refer to the statement made by President Ford when he lost the recent Presidential election held in the United States of America. "It is apparent now that you have won our long and intense struggle. I congratulate you on your victory". President Ford had also stated that differences must be set aside for the sake of their country and finally added, "You will have my complete and wholehearted support as you take the oath of office this January".

Our political leaders should take a lesson from this great statesman-like qualities of the defeated leader. Have any political leaders in this country, since 1948, uttered any such statement when they lost at the General Elections? On the other hand has any newly elected Prime Minister assured the defeated leader that there will be no victimisation or vengeance directed at his or her supporters and asked for the support of the rival leader to ensure peace so that a programme of work could be carried out until the next elections? I, therefore, appeal to both the present Prime Minister and the Honourable Mr. J. R. Jayewardene to show the qualities of President Ford when one of them loses the next General Election to be held in this country. I also appeal to the victor to advise his or her supporters not to go on a rampage but protect the supporters of the defeated party. I sincerely hope that both the present Prime Minister and the present Honourable Leader of the Opposition will not give leave to the Police after victory at the Election so that innocent citizens of this country will not lose their lives or be injured. The next General Election I assure you will be a long, bitter and intense struggle for the capture of political power both by the UNP and the SLFP. Let party politics be forgotten after the General Election and let all citizens support the Government in power to bring about peace, prosperity, economic growth and moral development of this beautiful country called Sri Lanka. Over to you Madame Prime Minister and the Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

Prof. A. D. P. Jayatilaka

Department of Anatomy,
University of Ceylon, Peradeniya.
5.11.76

peoples who yearn for civil liberties and democratic rule. Liberal and democratic elements throughout the world, including those in the US, are disturbed by the rightward switch that international ultra-rightists have achieved in a large number of countries in recent months. There have also been attempted military-rightist coups in countries like Burma. And the major destabilisation offensive launched by the rightwing in India was contained only by the vigorous emergency measures of the Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.

The coup in Thailand is also a major challenge to the Non-aligned Movement. The Colombo Summit had drawn the attention of all developing countries that national independence and sovereignty could be sustained only by fighting and liquidating colonialism and neo-colonialism. The Thai coup has also created new problems for China which had taken for granted that by quitting Vietnam the US was withdrawing from all geopolitical intrigues in Southeast Asia. The establishment of a rightist military dictatorship—posing a new threat to Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos—is likely to make Peking think things over in a fundamental way.

In this situation, countries like Vietnam are likely to respond more enthusiastically to the Soviet call for an Asian Security Scheme which will ultimately lead to an agreement like the Helsinki Treaty. The newly elected President, Jimmy Carter, has exhibited allergic inhibitions against the Helsinki Agreement, but he has promised a new deal to Third World countries.

Thailand will be a test of what he means by support for the Third World. Would he want rightwing military dictatorships maintaining power with terror and brutality, such as the one in Thailand, as the kind of government the Carter Administration will support in the Third World?

News reports from Bangkok have stressed that the new junta of Generals and Admirals will seek US help not only to stabilise the

government but also eradicate "communism" inside the country—besides containing "communism" in the Indochina peninsula without letting it overflow into Thailand and other ASEAN countries. The new Thai government has already indicated that it would invite the US to take over the bases it had quit, but there is no indication whether the US will do this.

It is likely that whilst the US will not want to get itself involved in Vietnam-name fashion in Thailand or any other Southeast Asian country, it will extend every possible support to stabilise the rule of the Generals in Thailand.

This is tantamount to a direct challenge to the nonaligned movement. The Colombo Summit had made it clear that the Movement was willing to help countries which are members of military blocs to break away and it was on this footing that the Philippines was granted Observer status at the last conference. Of the five ASEAN countries, three are already members—Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore—and one has acquired Observer status—the Philippines.

Thailand is the odd one out. And, if the Seni Pramoj government had continued it would not have been long before Thailand too would have moved closer towards the nonaligned movement. The new Thai Government established by the Generals has already reversed everything the Pramoj government had endeavoured to do.

It is unfortunate that the Seni Pramoj government was not able to fight the de-stabilisation and sustain itself in power. The Hindu in an editorial on October 8, shortly after the bloody coup, summed up the situation thus:

IT WAS JUST three years ago that the military regime was ousted from power in Thailand and that country has come under military rule again. It was a student rebellion which pushed the generals out on October 15, 1973, and ironically violent clashes between leftist and rightist students in the capital, Bangkok, gave the military the opportunity now to intervene "in the interests of national security" and preservation of the monarchy.

Thailand's venture into a democratic administration, with the full support of the 49-year-old King Bhumibol, did not lead to the expected stability because of the multiplicity of political parties (built around personalities) which jumped into the election fray. In the January 1975 elections there were as many as 42 parties in the field. The April 1976 situation was not much better, with 39 parties contesting. The conservative and the centrist parties did well in the April election, with the military-backed Nationalists doubling their seats in Parliament. Seni Pramoj, who became Premier in April and resigned on September 23 following a political storm over the return from exile of the former military ruler, Marshal Thanom, formed another government last Tuesday. Rightists immediately pressed for the exclusion of three leftists from the new Cabinet. In a day of fighting between rightists and leftists students and in police action taken without the prior permission of the Prime Minister, hundreds of people were injured and at least 30 were killed. Admiral Sangad Chalawyo, appointed Defence Minister only a day earlier, has stepped in as leader.

Not unexpectedly, the new strongman has tried to justify the takeover as an effort to stem the tide of communist influence. With Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia under communist rule, there has been a school of thought in Thailand subscribing to the theory that it too would go leftist if stern measures were not taken. The armed forces radio has been harping on this theme for some months. Seni's administration certainly was indecisive on several domestic matters, while successfully building bridges with neighbouring countries. There is an extensive guerilla movement in Thailand's north-east. The leftists who lost heavily in the April elections were organising agitations in Bangkok to stay in the public view. With the Constitution abrogated and all political activity banned, Thailand goes back to the stern hands of the military rulers who have held the reins for most of the past three decades. Part of the blame rests with the extra-parliamentary agitators for the suffocation of the democratic experiment in its infant stage.

The Thai Generals have now thrown the ball into Washington's Court.

What next?

POLITICAL EARTHQUAKE IN

PEKING—3

How Hua Did It?

By Kautiliya

Sri Lanka has no newspaper correspondents of its own in Peking, and this country does not have a direct flow of news from China. All the news we have about China is from international news agencies and from articles in magazines abroad. The New China News Agency *Hsinhua* bulletins published in Colombo present only one side of the picture—the picture which the ruling hierarchy seek to convey to the World.

To understand how Hua and his friends were able to outwit the Chiang Ching group we have to rely on articles and comments on papers which, over the years, have shown that they have a good insight into events in China. It must be admitted that no newspaper, however prestigious, has been able to anticipate developments in China, but the *Far Eastern Economic Review* of Hongkong and the British *The Economist* have always shown greater awareness of current trends in China. Magazines like *Time* and *Newsweek* have been "wise" after the event, but they have the editorial competence and resources to marshal information (slanted from a US point of view) when something big breaks in China (or anywhere else).

To enable our readers to understand how Hua Kuo-feng "did the trick", we will refer to articles in the *Far Eastern Economic Review* of October 22 by David Bonavia and news-comments in *The Economist* of October 23 and October 30.

The FEER, 22/10/76 article carried the headline: **RADICALS: THE BIG SHOWDOWN.**

The wheel of the Cultural Revolution has finally come full circle in Peking. Most of those who originally climbed onto it have been thrown off by gravitational forces and the people it was meant to grind have returned to the controls. In a melodramatic move, 10 years after the big Red Guard rallies of October 1966, Mao's widow, Chiang Ching, and other

leading organisers of this extraordinary movement were arrested in Peking by the bodyguards of the man they had put into power only six months before. Premier (now Party Chairman) Hua Kuo-feng. They are to be accused of attempting to forge Mao's testament and make Chiang Ching the Chairman instead of Hua. No official confirmation of this story had been broadcast by the Chinese media as the *Review* went to press, except that Hua was officially confirmed as Chairman, and as editor-in-chief of the forthcoming edition of Mao's works. The Foreign Ministry in Peking issued a "no comment" even on reports from Japan that Wang Hung-wen and three others under arrest had been executed.

An unofficial but highly plausible report told of the impending convention of the third plenum of the Tenth Central Committee, to endorse the purge of Chiang Ching, Wang Hung-wen, Yao Wen-yuan, Chang Chun-chiao and others, and to name new people to fill the gaping holes in the ranks of the Chinese leadership. (Profiles, *Review* Sept. 24) By the end of the second week of October, every reliable observer of Chinese affairs was convinced of the basic truth of the arrests story, although still puzzled by questions of detail and timing. The leadership now consists, on paper, of Chairman Hua, two members of the Politburo Standing Committee (Yeh Chien-ying and Li Teh-sheng,) and a Politburo which consists of 12 full members at most, fewer if some other members also have fallen to Hua's scythe.

The third plenum will doubtless go down in Chinese history as the biggest turning point since the 1966 downfall of Liu Shao-chi, the former head of state, and the mass campaign to purge the Chinese leadership of most of its veteran revolutionaries in favour of a group of "radicals" whose assignment was to implement Mao's interesting but essentially impractical ideas about combating "revisionism". Whatever the third plenum decides, 1976 has undoubtedly been one of the vintage years of Chinese politics. It has been the year in which the Chinese leadership finally turned its back on the leftist schemes hatched from 1966 on, and probably set its face to

solving the country's development problems by more conventional methods. This has far-reaching implications, not only for China but also for the rest of the world, especially the Third World. The sequence of events as it became known to foreign observers was as follows:

OCTOBER 9: The official press announced a Central Committee decision to build a memorial hall for Mao's remains, and appointed Hua to re-edit his works. Wall posters acclaiming Hua as Party Chairman and Chairman of the Military Affairs Commission (MAC) went up in places where they were sure to be seen by foreign diplomats, but were torn down a few hours later.

OCTOBER 10: The *New China News Agency* (NCNA) reported nationwide acclamation of the decision regarding the memorial hall and the editing of Mao's works, but referred to Hua only as "head of the Central Committee". Hundreds more posters acclaiming him as Party and MAC Chairman went up in Peking, Shanghai and probably other cities. Different posters called on the people to support the armed forces, and said no one could defeat the unity of the People's Liberation Army and the masses. The *People's Daily* warned people against "conspiring".

OCTOBER 11: Hua went to Peking Airport to meet Papua New Guinea's Premier Michael Somare, and was officially still referred to as Premier, not Chairman. Vice-Premier Li Hsien-nien accompanied Somare into town, and Hua, in an unusual departure from protocol, went off on his own, apparently to attend a vital top-level meeting. Rumours of the arrests flew in Peking and Hongkong.

OCTOBER 12: The *London Daily Telegraph's* Peking correspondent published the story of the arrests and the Foreign Ministry reacted only with a "no comment." In the evening, NCNA announced Hua's chairmanship.

OCTOBER 13: A senior Chinese official was reported to have told a foreigner in Peking that Chiang Ching and more than 30 of her supporters were arrested by Hua's bodyguard while holding a secret conclave aimed at falsifying Mao's will and putting Chiang Ching

into the chairmanship. Simultaneously, reports of the impending third plenum were leaked.

The puzzling aspect of this narrative is that some reports put the arrests as far back as October 7, and there is no explanation why there was such an unprecedented muddle over the announcement of Hua's chairmanship. Possibly, Chiang Ching and her supporters tried to back down at the last moment by acclaiming Hua as Chairman, once they realised their own position was hopeless.

There is fairly general agreement among military analysts that Hua had reached an understanding with the top army commanders, under which he would satisfy most of their demands for better weapons and more resources, if they would help purge the Chiang Ching group and put him in office. As noted in the Review of May 21, after Hua was appointed Premier his position as chief administrator was likely to lead him into conflict with Chiang Ching, who was essentially ignorant of problems of national administration.

Hua has shown himself a much better politician than anyone gave him credit for, and he has been underrated by almost everybody because of his modest personal style and "low profile". But his position as Premier gave him the opportunity to hold secret meetings with top military commanders—probably Defence Minister Yeh Chien-ying and Peking Military Region Commander Chen Hsi-lien—at which the basic agreement could have been reached with little more than a nod and a wink. The fact that Hua was head of the Ministry of Public Security throughout 1975, and probably kept an interest in that useful organ even after his promotion to the acting premiership last February, would have made the arrest of the Chiang Ching group relatively easy to plan.

Less clear is the position of the so-called 8341 detachment—former bodyguards of Mao Tse-tung in the Chungnanhai residential complex, commanded by Politburo member Wang Tung-hsing. Did they go along with Hua's counter-coup, or will Wang be numbered among its victims?

There is firm evidence that several divisions of troops from the Shenyang Military Region were

brought down to Hopei, ostensibly to assist in earthquake relief at Tangshan last August. They were last reported to be still there. Analysts believe that Chen Hsi-lien, who was Shenyang Commander until 1974 and doubtless still has loyal officers there, wanted to have some back-up forces in case of a real military showdown over the planned purge of Chiang Ching.

Chen and Hua may also have agreed that it would be a good idea to withdraw some divisions from the effective control of Shenyang's present commander, Li Teh-sheng, in case Li should decide to back Chiang Ching and march on Peking. Li could have grounds for grievance in the sense that the membership of the Politburo Standing Committee which was taken from him under Teng Hsiaoping was not returned to him after Teng's downfall.

Another burning question is whether and how Teng Hsiaoping who was ousted from his posts as vice-premier and vice-chairman in April to make room for Hua, will be brought back into the leadership. To bring him out again immediately would be a ticklish exercise in public opinion after the massive and spiteful campaign against him which Chiang Ching masterminded from early this year. But nowadays nothing is ruled out in Chinese politics.

The temper of the new regime in China is expected to be "moderate"—that is, emphasis will probably be placed on modernisation through material incentive and technology, exactly the ideas for which Teng was attacked. With any luck, Chiang Ching's tedious films, operas and ballets will be banned from the theatres and cinemas, and the long-frustrated Chinese intelligentsia may be able to make its voice heard and its creativity felt once again.

Developments in foreign policy are hard to foresee, since they are dictated by external as much as internal circumstances. Stronger emphasis on Chinese nation-building is to be expected, and the much-discussed rapprochement with the Soviet Union is unlikely to go beyond the reaching of limited understandings to wind down the present level of tension. China has learned too many bitter lessons about the Soviet Union to want

to make itself dependent on Moscow ever again.

The most intriguing question of all is how Hua will set about editing Mao's apparently voluminous literary heritage. The *Selected Works*, it is announced, are to be updated beyond 1949, where they now end, by the publication of the fifth and subsequent volumes. In addition, there is to be a *Collected Works*.

The editing of Mao's opus would be a highly dangerous and controversial problem for anyone not holding the chairmanship. But as Party Chairman, Hua can play Stalin to Mao's Lenin, quite possibly with impunity. The net effect of the publication of a *Collected Works* will be to water down the idea that Mao was a dyed-in-the-wool radical, for many of his works (published abroad without the sanction of the Chinese authorities) show that his mind was wider and richer than such a conception would admit.

The most important single weapon of the radicals in their 10-year pursuit of Cultural Revolution was their *carte blanche* to decide which of Mao's sayings would be used as the framework for national policy. It was Mao's death which finally deprived them of that prerogative, and led them into the last desperate plot which brought about their downfall. Hua's only real worry now must be that those who have put him in power may have done so for their own ends, and he may yet turn out to be a short-lived leader supplanted in his turn by another strongman.

The Economist of October 23, 1976 under the headline HUA LEAVES THE RADICALS TWISTING IN THE WIND stated:

Power can be seized by a lightning stroke: consolidating and legitimising it takes longer. This is why, two weeks after Mr. Hua Kuo-feng was first identified as "heading" China's politburo, he has yet to be endowed with the title that goes with the job. And this is why, even after the central committee formally names him chairman of the Communist party, as it is expected to do any day, the struggle to make the appointment stick will go on. The mechanics of Mr. Hua's takeover of China in early October are still being

deduced from lurid accounts in wall posters, from coded references in the press, and from overt evidence in the streets. He appears to have mounted a four-pronged operation: to mop up known enemies; to neutralise potential opponents; to generate mass support; and, most important, to secure the allegiance of key army commanders.

One pivotal figure in the takeover must have been the Peking commander, Chen Hsi-lien. As the man in charge of all forces in the Peking area, Chen would have been in a position to make or break a power play. His Peking garrison issued a formal pledge of loyalty to Hua on October 16th—which suggests both that Hua needed such a public display and that Chen was ready to deliver it. According to posters, Chen had been asked to join the radical four in a plot but turned and blew the whistle on them to Hua. This story is gratifying to China-watchers, for it implies that Chen's allegiance was as unfathomable to his colleagues as to observers outside. Chen is likely to get his reward when the new line-up is announced.

The pledge from the Peking garrison was followed the next day by a similar and even more significant declaration by the army garrison in Shanghai. The radicals' power base in China's biggest city plainly had to be broken if Hua was to survive. The mass demonstrations in Shanghai that started on October 15th, with their hanging effigies of Mrs. Mao, suggested that Shanghai had abandoned its erstwhile heroine without a qualm. So did the loyalty pledge from the radicals' private army—the local million-man militia—on October 18th. But the conquest of Shanghai was almost certainly neither quick nor easy, and may not yet be complete.

As late as October 12th, two days after the People's Daily published its first veiled editorial attack on people who "tamper with Chairman Mao's directives" and "engage in conspiracies", Shanghai radio was still harping on the old radical theme of the need to struggle against "capitalist-roaders". It even went beyond previous limits by linking such capitalist-roaders with "American aggressors"—a clue, perhaps, to the radicals' views about China's

American connection. A few days later Shanghai demonstrators were accusing local party officials of trying to defend the arrested radicals and distributing weapons to the local militia.

The arrest of Mrs. Mao and the other members of the radicals' "gang of four" is even now unconfirmed—though the spread of the demonstrations to the capital on Thursday points to a formal denunciation soon. Posters have offered conflicting versions of the circumstances of their capture; at a politburo meeting after the four had voted against Hua's ass-

umption of Mao's mantle; at a secret get-together of their own where the four were forging Mao's will and or plotting to assassinate Hua. The second version ends in a shootout in which three guards were killed—the source, presumably, for Japanese reports last week that the four radicals had been murdered.

With the leaders of the radical faction out of the way, Hua moved against their followers. Dozens of radicals are reported to have been arrested, allegedly including Mao's nephew, Mao Yuan-hsin, a party secretary in Liaoning province, and the minister of culture, a protege

WANTED: MORE TREES

Man's activities could have a radical effect on the earth's climate ranging from making the world warmer to making it cold enough to set off a new ice age.

COMPUTER EXPERIMENTS at University of California's Lawrence Livermore Laboratory show that current efforts at widespread clearing of tropical jungles could cause temperatures to drop and rainfall to decrease around the planet.

World-wide average temperatures would drop about a third of a degree if widespread tropical vegetation is stripped and more open land uncovered according to the researchers. That may seem insignificant but in Iceland it was less than a degree and a half down from statistically normal temperatures that generated a "little ice age" that froze Europe 300 years ago.

The experiments also show however, that loading the atmosphere with carbon dioxide through continued burning of such fossil fuels as coal and oil tends to make earth warmer.

Now the world's average temperature is only 7 to 10 degrees warmer than it was 5,000 years ago—when the great ice age covered most of the northern hemisphere.

They reasoned that since green equatorial jungles absorb the sun's warming rays and keep the atmosphere moist, clearing jungles would reflect the sun's energy back to space and cause less recycling of moisture warming.

As a result rainfall would decrease by a half-inch a year in the north temperature zone and as much as eight inches a year at the equator.

The scientists stressed that while computer models are fallible the trends up or down are likely to prove correct.

Meteorologist Hugh W. Ellsaesser a member of the group said the changes in global climate from widespread jungle clearing would be counterbalanced by the continued burning of fossil fuels.

Ellsaesser said that if the pace of fossil fuel burning continues to rise in the next century the pileup of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere would double causing temperatures to rise by at least 2½ degrees.

Were it not for that warming influence he said jungle clearing might well be enough to trigger expansion of the polar ice caps and start a new ice age.

The researchers conceded that their conclusions are speculative but they claimed that major changes are actually occurring in earth's climate now and they can be measured precisely.

From 1890 to 1940 average temperatures in the northern hemisphere rose more than a degree as the earth warmed but since 1940 the northern temperatures have dropped nearly three-quarters of a degree and the down-trend continues.

of Mrs. Mao. Troops were seen at Peking universities this week, where they are thought to have picked up radical organisers and propagandists. A similar swoop is assumed to have taken place at the newspapers and broadcasting stations which have been under radical control for years....."

The Economist of October 30, 1976 continued with the story with a piece entitled HOW SUPER MAO AND CAPTAIN HUA FOILED THE FOUR.

No wonder the Chinese never understood all that fuss about Watergate; it was kid's stuff compared with what Chairman Hua now claims was going on about the same time in the Forbidden City. The tales that are being spun about the evil deeds of Mrs Mao's "gang of four" sound less like the Nixon White House than the plottings of palace eunuchs in a Ming dynasty court. They make the best melodrama the Chinese have been treated to since the posthumous release in 1972 of *How to Murder Mao* by Lin Piao.

Some of the charges against Mrs Mao and her three Shanghai colleagues are clearly fantastical: as is their instant transmogrification from radical xenophobes into ultra-rightists bent on restoring capitalism and capitulating to imperialism. All China's political losers must turn out to be rightists in the end. But the speed of this latest flip-flop would seem to defy credibility, even in China—unless the Chinese are by now so sophisticated in these matters that they simply receive the message: for capitalist, read villain.

And villainy Chairman Hua is determined to prove it was. The official version of events has Mao rebuking the big bad four for plotting to seize power in the autumn of 1974. "Chiang Ching has wild ambitions", her husband is now reported to have said on the eve of the long-delayed National People's Congress. "She wants Wang Hung-wen to be chairman of the NPC standing committee (a ceremonial post, equivalent to head of state) and herself to become chairman of the party central committee" (Mao's job—the one that counts).

She did not succeed. In fact, what was striking about the January, 1975, meeting of the National

People's Congress was that Mr. Wang, then out in front as Mao's heir-apparent, got no government job at all and neither did Mrs. Mao. Mao himself did not attend, but the latest revelations are meant to suggest that Mao actually helped that moderate victory and also resisted earlier attempts by the radicals to poison his mind against Chou En-lai. Maybe so. But maybe the new facts are not so much facts at all as the ritual rewriting of history that has traditionally followed every new Chinese dynasty and, in the communist period, every new purge.

The current outpourings have two aims: to blacken the radicals and to legitimise the ascent of Hua Kuo-feng to the party's chairmanship. Both require an active role for the late Mao. Not only is he pictured scolding the radicals time and again—with remarkable ineffectuality: for example, he is quoted as thundering at a politburo meeting in May, 1975, "if this is not settled in the first of this year, it should be settled in the second half; if not this year, then next year; if not next, then the year after." He is also reported personally to have chosen Hua Kuo-feng as his successor and to have written of a letter endorsement in his own handwriting on April 30th this year: "With you in charge, I'm at ease". If the phrase has a familiar ring, it is because Mao is said to have made a similar comment to President Ford about Teng Hsiao-ping just two months before Teng began his descent into political purgatory.

One of the last wicked acts of the radicals was their forgery of an alleged last instruction by Mao—"Act according to principles laid down". This slogan appeared in the first editorial after Mao's death and was "energetically publicised" afterwards. Hua Kuo-feng did not include it in his funeral oration and exposed it as a counterfeit on October 2nd. But so brazen were the plotters—and so strongly in control of China's media—that they published it again two days later in Peking's Kwangming Daily. Then began the countdown which ended on October 7th with the appointment of Hua Kuo-feng as party chairman. That appointment, first leaked out in posters and official nods, was finally confirmed

at a mass rally in Peking on October 24th.

Hua received the masses' blessing from Peking's Gate of Heavenly Peace wearing army uniform for the first time—a symbol of his new job as commander-in-chief but also a reminder of his debt to the army for its help in his power seizure. Mao appeared in army uniform at a similar turning-point for a similar reason at the start of the cultural revolution in 1966.

Standing beside Chairman Hua at the rally was every member of the politburo still capable of standing on his feet—a politburo now down from its full strength of 25 to 16. One curious aspect of this high-speed political drama is that these gaps in the politburo (plus other empty slots in the central committee and in the army high command) have been so slow to be filled.

The transition to the new era is not over yet. But new policy shadings are already emerging. The editorial that appeared in China's main papers on October 25th celebrating the "great historic victory" ended with a restatement of the economic goals which Chou En-lai presented to the 1975 National People's Congress: to accomplish the comprehensive modernisation of agriculture, industry, national defence, science and technology and build China into a powerful socialist country before the end of the century. This plan, aggressively promoted by Teng Hsiao-ping over the following year, was being denounced as a capitalist heresy only a few weeks ago.

Another hint of change came in the annual speech by Peking's military commander, Chen Hsi-lien, to mark the 26th anniversary of China's entry into the Korean war. The familiar slogans about China's "resolute support" for the "just struggle" of the Korean people were there. But not last year's explicit Chinese endorsement of North Korea's demand that American troops should be withdrawn from South Korea; nor last year's claim that the presence of American troops was the "root cause" of Korean tensions. President Kim Il Sung of North Korea may be the fifth big radical to fall from grace in Peking.

In Sri Lanka we have to rely on foreign newsmagazines and news papers to get an understanding of

developments in China. In a subsequent article we will examine the official news bulletins from China to show that one cannot get anything more than a partial and sectarian view of the history being made in China. But the official bulletins reveal one aspect of the truth as some Chinese see it—very valuable but not complete.

The Maoists in Sri Lanka have, so far, maintained a strange silence about these matters. Maoists in some other countries have welcomed the changes and greeted Hua as the new Marxist saviour. But the majority of Maoist parties (usually called "Marxist-Leninist") have become sullenly silent. The more outspoken among Maoists in Sri Lanka have stated unequivocally that they are for the radicals and Chiang Ching. One interesting aspect of this political earthquake in Peking is to study its impact on Maoist parties abroad.

(To be Continued)



BUILDING A VILLAGE HOUSE—38

A Layman's Questions Concerning Rain

By Herbert Keuneman

Our tank is full, and I am in a hole! Pema (who is still with me and apparently intends to stay until I find him the job which will enable him to abandon me entirely and which I am genuinely exerting myself to do—a pretty good gauge, I should say, though I say it myself, of my own disinterestedness! as well as of Pema's confidence that I will continue disinterested—a reflexion concerning myself that gives much rise to that highly gratifying sin, Spiritual Pride) Pema, to continue what I was saying, now abandons me temporarily first thing in the morning, his work undone but his conscience apparently clear, and remains disappeared until well after dusk and too late to light the lamps. He is *niyara kotanava*, he says, repairing the dikes of the family paddy-field (and after that he will have to do the sowing)

and seems to feel that this absolves him.

I suppose it does. I cannot really blame him or any local farmer for being all so steamed up at the prospect of a crop after having reaped no sowing for six seasons (three years). But, for their own sakes, I sincerely wish they were not so convinced that the Rains have Come, that is to say that seed-time and harvest have been restored to their proper sequence and that, in future, saving aberrations on the part of angry or simply negligent gods, while the earth remains these will not fail. If only one could convince them that man—that they—with the politician's aid—can frustrate what even divinities decree!

For I am sure that (for us in the Vanni, anyway) the Rains, and by the capitalized word I mean the classical climatic pattern of Monsoon/Inter-monsoon/Monsoon . . . upon which the entire agricultural rationale of this traditional granary of the nation is based, is in the process of being recklessly destroyed—if it has not been irreparably destroyed already—and that we must soberly set about to salvage it if it is salvageable or urgently devise new measures to meet an entirely new climatic programme.

It could be said, and probably will be, that as a layman I have no business being sure; that I am neither a climatologist nor even a meteorologist nor even a farmer; that I am neither a scientist nor even a practitioner of any kind that is relevant and I should refrain from shooting out my mouth about matters concerning which I have neither theoretical knowledge nor practical experience. In fact, it has been said already: a couple of weeks ago, in an article in this series which I called *Talking Of Trees*, I touched on the subject in passing and a couple of friends who read the article in manuscript said it. But while admitting my disqualifications I maintain my thesis, I justify my position, precisely as a layman. As a layman I have the questions; it is for the scientists to provide me with the answers, just as it is for farmers, foresters and other practitioners concerned to devise practical ways and means in the light of the answers with which the scientists come up.

Let us meanwhile not be too intimidated by the professionals, us laymen. Professionals are no less liable than laymen to be subconsciously influenced (or cynically inclined) towards professing what is complaisant to profess. In certain circumstances they may be more so. Untrammelled, the Scientific Method leads the ideally scientific mind—but a B.Sc. is no guarantee of that—to objective conclusions. Yet most minds are trammelled! it is difficult, for instance, to have to admit an error; perhaps it is more difficult still to detect a preconception or a prejudice when it is one's own; and it is doubtless most difficult of all to come right out and profess what may be officially unacceptable. When the Church was the supreme power it took a Galileo to speak up for Copernicanism. And today, when the supreme power is the politician and the politician is committed to the policy of 'slaughter-tapping' the country's every resource for immediate expediency. . . well, don't mistake every 'scientist' for a Galileo, that's all!

And now, if you please, I will state my questions—for the professionals to answer—more fully and formally than I did in that previous article.

(1) IS IT NOT TRUE THAT FOR AGRICULTURE, AND ESPECIALLY THE CULTIVATION OF RICE, IN RAJA RATA, THE INTER-MONSOON RAINS ARE NOT LESS IMPORTANT THAN THOSE OF THE SINGLE (NORTHEAST) MONSOON THAT AFFECTS US? The non-dweller in these areas tends to think of the 'tanks' as storage reservoirs once and for all replenished for each year by monsoonal rain with water to last the whole year through. This may be true, within limits, of some of the giant tanks; and may have been wholly true at an earlier period when not every acre of land which was irrigable by them was being exploited. But now, with every cultivable scrap below them cultivated, it is probably no longer true even of them; and it is certainly not true of the innumerable village tanks which still function.

Starting at the beginning of the farmer's year, with the Maha crop safely gathered in and his own

well-being renewed by the relaxation of the April holiday, the sequence goes—ideally—like this. The farmer's purse, after the New Year's jollification, is empty but his village tank, thanks to the deviyu and the March/April inter-monsoonal showers, is full. It is time to begin to recoup himself with the Yala sowing. This crop expends a large portion of his tank water, maybe all of it that can be coaxed through the sluice; but never mind: the second inter-monsoon rains, of late August/September will restore most of it as well as soak the fields sufficiently to plough and make ready for his major crop, the Maha. Then, at its time around mid-October, comes the first cyclonic depression of the Northeast Monsoon and the tank is sufficiently refilled to be drawn upon as the burgeoning fields demand until the successive cyclones of the later season set in. Even a weak monsoon will leave a surplus in the tank after the Maha is harvested, so that the rains of next inter-monsoon period (March/April) will again fill the tank to brimming and the new farmer's year get off to an auspicious start.

Even a failed monsoon spells failure only of the single harvest, the Maha (though that, be it admitted, the more generous one). But fail the inter-monsoonal rains of August/September—which allow the timely ploughing for the planting of a 4½ month strain of heavy-yield paddy—and a full Maha crop is in any case doomed; and fail those of March/April, and the ensuing Yala harvest is doomed as well. In other words, fail the year's monsoon and you have a serious shortage; fail the year's convection rains and you have famine.

(2) IS IT NOT TRUE THAT IN VERY RECENT YEARS THESE CRITICAL RAINS HAVE FAILED? The official answer is No. But I have just been—see above—at some pains to suggest that official answers tend to be naturally suspect. At the time of the Emancipation movement when the official answer was still No, great theologians who could prove Biblically that slavery was the divinely right condition for Hamitic peoples were vastly in the majority. You might well argue that theological questions are matters of

opinion or interpretation, while matters such as rainfall have objective parameters: but wrong parameters could be applied, or the right ones applied wrong.

A popular such application is based upon a recently published table listing rainfall figures through all seasons of the year for a hundred years and showing no significant reduction in the century; very impressive. BUT: the figures stop off at about 1970; and it is since about 1970 that the fall-off has taken place. I have not the figures for these latest years; but somebody must have them, and for a valid argument produce them, and prove there has been no difference in inter-monsoonal rainfall between 1970-76 and 1870-76. Or even between 1970-76 and 1963-1969.

Meanwhile, the experience of those who live, and especially those who farm, in Raja Kata (if nowhere else) is that their vital convection rains have been knocked for six.

After long deferment our tank is full and spilling. But not the thunder showers of August/September did it, as they should have done. It has filled (too late, perhaps, for sowing the best paddy) from the first of the Northeast Monsoon. For two weeks we have had typical 'depression' weather: cold and grey days and weeping heavy skies, not the bright noons followed by the majestic sweep of a two-hour rainstorm out of towering clouds that should have prepared us for the Monsoon's sullen bounty.

There is another point of which to be aware and wary. It is a mistake to think of the convection system as solely a vast-spread overriding phenomenon such as a monsoon is. There is an overall almost islandwide system with its origin in the central mountain mass; but there are also innumerable small and highly localized systems—there have to be, by the very nature of convection currents—which must interact with widespread ones (and these with the overall one). So that the fact that there is a certain pattern or a certain density of such rainfall over a meteorological station set in a courtyard at the Ratnapura Kachcheri does not mean the same figures hold good for Dewalagama two miles away. Just two

weeks ago (as I write this) there was a 3.5" cloudburst over the rain gauge at Anuradhapura; but at Mihintale, only about six miles off as the crow flies, there was only a hard 1.1", or thereabouts, shower. At a friend's farm halfway between some 2.5" fell. There could easily be recorded plentiful rain where one of our too-few rain-gauges stands while there is near-drought quite close by. And vice-versa, of course. We need up-to-the-minute records, accurate records, and abundantly and strategically dispersed records before even climatologists can begin authoritatively pronouncing upon this subject.

(3) IS IT NOT TRUE THAT CONVECTION WINDS ARE CHARACTERISTICALLY 'LOCAL' IN ORIGIN, AND MODIFIED BY 'LOCAL' GEOGRAPHICAL CIRCUMSTANCES, AND LARGELY INDEPENDENT OF GLOBAL INFLUENCES ON CLIMATE? It seems to me that to blame decreasing inter-monsoonal rainfall on a change or shift global wind patterns is about on a par with blaming the arbitrary prices you and I in Sri Lanka currently pay for oil, or sugar, or cement, on last year's 'World Prices'. Even if global winds ceased altogether, our island's convectional winds would still blow, and perhaps blow more predictably, being caused by local conditions entirely. The global winds—our Monsoons—are powerful enough to obscure them, that is all.

(4) IS IT NOT TRUE THAT IF IN FACT THE ISLAND'S CONVECTIONAL RAIN (ITS INTER-MONSOON RAINFALL) HAS SUDDENLY DECREASED, THEN THE REASON MUST BE SOUGHT IN SOME RELATABLE CHANGE NOT ONLY CONTEMPORANEOUS WITH THE CHANGE IN THE RAINFALL BUT ALSO LIKE THE CAUSATION OF CONVECTIONAL RAINS, ESSENTIALLY LOCAL IN CHARACTER? There are the key words of the clue: *relatable*; *contemporaneous*; and *local*. What that can be shown to affect convectional rainfall has taken place in Ceylon at a time to account for the rainfall's decrease? It seems a very likely answer that it is the denudation of the forest lands in

the very areas where the inter-monsoonal rains are most required.

Let us—but only temporarily—beg the question of reliability; of whether forests do actually influence rainfall, and consider how nearly this answer fits the other conditions of the clue. Local? Well obviously. Contemporaneous?

Please observe that the critical period is that for which we have few published statistics, the period from 1970 on. Then observer further that this has been—what with all the clearing for heedlessly hopeful agricultural development schemes and all the felling for get-rich-quick greed to exploit irreplaceable standing timber for Foreign Currency, that mystical mantra—the period during which our forests have been most ruthlessly extensively destroyed. Does this signify anything? It has been remarked that deforestation on at least the same scale took place during the early Plantation era up-country and that 'no' damage was done to the rainfall at that time. But in the absence of records how can anyone tell? Certainly the early accounts of Ceylon's 'wet seasons' suggest weather distinctly more inclement than a modern monsoon.

Besides, it is possible that the function of forests is not so much to supply moisture (up-country, where the convectional system originates) as to bring rain down; and particularly in the drier zones where it is so needed.

(5) And this brings us to the moot but \$ 64 question. **IS IT TRUE THAT FORESTS HELP RAINFALL, AND PERHAPS ESPECIALLY CONVECTIONAL RAINFALL?**

Not all the experts will agree, but it is probably accurate to state that a pale and vague consensus exists that they do. None is quite sure how, nor how much; but such an experiment as that described by the American Hursh in 1948 is typical, both in its comparatively exigent empiricity and (at the same time) its apparently unquestionable result. Comparing 4-year rainfall figures obtained from an ex-forest tract in Tennessee denuded by atmospheric pollution, he was brought to the wary conclusion that 'forests in the area

had a slight but statistically significant effect in raising the amount of precipitation' (my italics). How or why the effect was caused he did not attempt to explain.

A friend of mine—a capable scientist, though neither climatologist nor meteorologist—believes that the forest's contribution to precipitation is the comparative coolness it imparts to the atmosphere overlying it and the condensation this encourages; I myself, but with due diffidence, ventured to wonder whether it might not rather be somewhat as follows: It is surely the case that the rain-bearing clouds of the 'all-island' convectional system (less heavily charged with moisture than monsoon clouds blowing right in from our seas) must grow and more spent of precipitable moisture as they drive farther and farther outward. Might it then not be that the abundant water-vapour released by forests in their process of transpiration—and perhaps more vapour rising from the soil-water stored and preserved under the forest shade—added to the moisture already contained in the depleted but still saturated convection-borne clouds is sufficient to tip the balance back to the point of precipitation?

But nothing, naturally, can come of hypotheses however informed or guesses however ingenious: only empirical answers will speak authoritatively. And, frankly, one doubts the likelihood of the necessary experiments being ever conducted, least of all in Sri Lanka. What must be involved would be an unglamorous kind of research, yielding no immediate results and therefore no immediate fame or—since incontestable statistics might well take more than all that time to compile—maybe even no fame in a lifetime. Moreover, any such research would beg sympathetic government support on an unprecedented scale. A finally authoritative experiment could hardly be less (granted that extrinsic factors could be prevented from invalidating it) than determining the rainfall over a sufficient period over a sufficient area of demarcated forest to yield figures of unquestionable authenticity; and then felling that forest and establishing the subsequent rainfall as meticulously! Some such experiment

properly scientifically set up would be a 'first' worth a country's collecting. Could be, the world would contribute? for the entire world would benefit from the answer.

But one can hardly see Sri Lanka in its present mood of reckless prodigality going for any such thing, even though in the absence of knowledge it might be self-evident that to go ahead destroying our forests for immediate political or temporary economic gain is brazenly the worst sort of selfishness and shortsightedness.

Who wants to save forests (though it may be the forests save the nation's life) when far more spectacular feats can be promised the people? And so, while the rape goes on we hear over the radio such claptrap possibilities as shoot in the rain down from the sky! Here is Nava Lanka: little Lanka, out there with the best of them, out there with the giants, the new Asuras? hurling thunderbolts at the very seat of the gods!



BEEDI

IS IT NOT A FACT that the saga of the damaged beedi (vide Tribune, Vol. 21/22, 6.11.76) has taken new and interesting turns? That, at the time the Corporation agreed to sell the 300,000 odd lbs of the so-called grade 2 "damaged" beedi leaf to a mysterious Beedi Workers Society of Colombo North with an even more mysterious organiser, it was thought that the whole quantity, worth nearly Rs. 5,000,000 at the knock-down price of Rs. 14/35 a lb, would be taken over by the purchaser at one go? That in reality, it is reported that the bigwigs have allowed this gentleman to remove small parcels at a time—probably after he arranges a sale for the quantity in the "open" black market? That it is also rumoured that the Corporation chiefs are considering a "rebate" on the Rs 14/35 price because the purchaser has complained that the market had dropped after the date of sale (or the leaf was more "damaged" than he had thought)? That there is some monkey business somewhere?

Confidentially

S. L. B. C.

IS IT NOT TRUE that nothing ever seems to bring about any change in the hierarchical dynasty that rules over the destinies of the SLBC? That there is no doubt that a kind of semi-feudal overlordship continues to prevail in the SLBC? That a new development confirms the fact that the SLBC is really a one-man show? That it is reported that two scholarships have been made available to SLBC staff for training in West Germany? That part of the course was to learn German (no doubt, from an English language base)? That these scholarships were for a stay of one year to one and a half years in the FRG? That (it is reported) that two "loyalists" of the SLBC palace establishment have already been "selected" for these scholarships? That no applications were called for? That no interviews were held to pick the best from a list of possible persons? That it is the opinion of those who know the SLBC staff—persons who have no axe to grind—that the two so selected are the least qualified to benefit from such a scholarship? That though it is customary to sing high praises of the official language (Sinhala), in practice, it has been found that those who go abroad for training benefit from such training only if they know the English language? That there is a classic example of an SLBC selectee for a scholarship being sent back from Singapore because he was not able to cope with the course owing to his ignorance of the English language? That, after this debacle, Singapore has not offered any scholarships for training courses to Sri Lanka radio staff? That the tragedy of the present selections are that there are a large number of others better qualified and better-equipped to benefit from the training offered by the FRG? That it is time that some higher authority than the one-man baronetcy in the SLBC looked into this matter? That it is not too late to prevent injustice which will also bring disgrace to the good name of Sri Lanka?

That while this personal "dictatorship" goes on, the broadcasts of the SLBC continue to widen the credibility gap between the Government and the public? That on the day the Budget debate opened the English broadcast over the SLBC first gave a lengthy account of what T. B. Ilangaratne said in the debate criticising the UNP and Mr. J. R. Jayewardene? That it was only after JR and the UNP had been "demolished" that the SLBC mentioned, with incidental indifference, that the debate had been opened by the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. J. R. Jayewardene, and the listener was left to infer that what Mr. Ilangaratne said was a reply to Mr. Jayewardene? That this kind of tortuous reporting does the SLBC no good? That it ultimately brings disrepute to the Government which owns, controls and runs the SLBC? (That the *Daily News*, the next morning, 10/11/76, reported the first day's proceedings of the budget debate with scrupulous fairness—with a full report of JR's speech followed by what TBI had to say?) That the SLBC reporting was slanted in order to belittle the UNP case even before the listeners knew what JR had said? That instance after instance of this kind of "reporting" can be cited? That it was only a few days earlier that the SLBC baron had ruled that an obituary notice could not go on the air because there was a mention that the deceased was the mother of the chief organiser of the Communist Party? That the Communist Party and the Aththa are anathema to the SLBC boss because of criticism which the Aththa has levelled at the goings-on in the SLBC and the Summit Press Centre? That the *Daily Mirror* had spotlighted the story about the SLBC refusal to broadcast this obituary notice on its frontpage and had followed this up with an editorial (on November 6) with the heading SLBC ANTICS? That this editorial merits citation for the record?

In pre-revolutionary Russia a censor deleted the words "All my love" from a letter written by a soldier on the grounds that they implied a lack of love for God and the Tsar. In 1960 panjandrums in New Delhi told the famous anthropologist, Dr. Verrier Elwin, that he would have to delete the sentence—"when tribal girls go to

towns they sometimes become tarts' from a report to the Home Minister. In its place Dr. Elwin substituted—"when females from scheduled tribes become acculturated to the socio-economic conditions of urban society they become psychologically maladjusted and adopt anti-social practices." The Brahmins were delighted by the circumlocution (and so presumably was the Home Minister). We have culled two instances taken at random of the ridiculous depths to which official censorship can sink because the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation has now provided yet another bizarre example of just how obtuse officialdom can be.

The refusal by the SLBC to broadcast an obituary of the death of the mother of Mr. K. P. Silva, chief organiser of the Communist Party, who represents his party at United Front summit meetings will undoubtedly be taken up at Summit level but where does this leave the ordinary citizen? What is chilling about the news story we published yesterday is that the counter-clerk or some such petty minion who refused to accept the obituary notice was not the Villain of the piece. The helpless guy or girl probably recalled the furore over "D.E.M.O'cracy" and played the game his superiors play day in and day out. He played safe. Thereafter the scenario shifts to loftier levels with a top official promising to get in touch with no less a person than the Director General of Broadcasting. Whether there was "an unavoidable breakdown in communications" (as announcers say in apologising for breaks in transmission) or not, we do not know. But ultimately the obituary was not broadcast. In fact after a lapse of two hours the notice was returned on the ground that it could not be broadcast.... We do not wish to anticipate the outcome of the Government's decision to ask Secretaries who also function as Chairmen of Corporations to opt for unilateral duties but the SLBC certainly calls for a clean up.

That what has surprised everybody is that in spite of the severe bashing from many quarters over a long period of time, the SLBC chief has continued to have his way?



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