

## LETTER TO LUCY

Dear Lucy:

Since you've expressed concern about nuclear plants, I'd like to know what you think about some of my observations on the subject.

After reading and watching the emergence of protestors and protests, principally since 1973 and the Arab oil embargo, and of course stimulated greatly by the Three Mile Island incident, it seems to me the underlying philosophy is to undermine public confidence in privately financed power companies and to push for publicly-owned power.

The targets of the protestors have all been private power companies. Protestors do NOT lie down in front of bulldozers preparing sites for nuclear power plants to be operated by the TVA. Protestors do NOT seem concerned that something in the neighborhood of 95% of the nuclear waste disposal problem is generated by the federal weapons programs. Nor do protestors raise hob because nuclear power plants in Israel, for example, don't have the reviews and safeguards now in effect in this country to ensure safety in nuclear power plants.

Protestors oppose pumped-storage generating stations at Cornwall-on-Hudson (north of West Point), however; this even though pumped storage is one of the most benign power-generating and conservation systems ever devised. It's been held up for something like fifteen years by self-appointed environmentalists. As you know, I'm an environmentalist myself, but not a knee-jerk one.

Most of the public, it seems, (and it matters little on which side people take a stand) respond to stimuli as though they were controlled by instinct rather than reason.

It's ironic the public eagerly accepts enormous mark-ups from companies like Revlon for products that cost only a fraction of the packaging expenses and pay prices that are an enormous multiple of the entire cost of product, packaging and distribution. And what do they get for their money? Perfumed goo.

The public appears to delight in and is willing to stand in long lines in the rain for seats in a theatre where they can undergo the emotional experience of watching "JAWS" or "JAWS II" or the outrageous "SWARM", a movie about the "deadly" bees.

No living organism that I can think of is more benign than the honeybee. True, they sting in self defense, but they kill nothing to provide their needs. Even cows destroy grass. But bees simply suck juices from flowers and pollinate them in the process. Apples, pears, squash, cranberries, all the fruits as well as all the non-fruited flowering plants would disappear without bees. And then the bees in their hives dry the juices to honey upon which they live.

And here are these idiotic movie people creating an absolutely false and destructive impression among hundreds of

thousands of fools who will henceforth attempt to kill every bee they see. I'm sure "SWARM" will be a money-maker. As H.L. Mencken said, "Nobody ever went broke underestimating the intelligence of the American people." The sad part of it is it's not the American public's good intentions that prevail. It if were, we'd be in good shape. It's their sheeplike momentum that carries us down the wrong roads.

A year or so ago there was a move afoot to have the City of New York take over Consolidated Edison. Con-Ed serves Westchester County as well as Manhattan. Nobody talked about the meter by-passing in the city (much more energy is used than is paid for). Nobody talked about the dead-beat users who move just before their power is shut off for non-payment. Nobody talked about the enormous technical problems of transmitting energy underground to a tremendously concentrated user-density. All one heard was how comparatively high Con-Ed's rates were. This was the media-line and this was what the public accepted as the whole truth.

To me, it's ethically repugnant to present such biased and grotesquely distorted views in public communications media. I've forgotten who said "the truth shall make us free," but it seems apparent that we, the general public, are not getting the truth. We're getting what almost looks to be a subversive point of view, and we're getting it from all sides on all issues.

It bothers me tremendously that I don't understand WHY we're being given such distorted pictures. Is it because "Good news doesn't sell newspapers"? or is it because certain lies or half-truths can be capitalized upon for long-term motives which the average slob, like me, can only guess at?

Are those who talk of The Communist Plot correct? What is really going on? How do we find out what's really going on?

Why is there so much pressure for public takeover of services when it seems obvious that government-run anything is the most costly option available? Are minority groups (the term has lost meaning, for who is there in this country who can't identify with one or another minority?) reacting to the vestigial remains of long-past discriminations by private industry? Do people "feel safer" with government-run services? I'd sure like to know.

I tend to feel the Seabrook demonstrations and similar ones, like those in the wake of Three Mile Island, are the present-day intellectual equivalent of the Children's Crusades, circa 1212 A.D. If such mass hysteria can surface, there'll always be opportunists eager to "lead them" Makes a real ego-trip for the leaders.

Remember Gurus, a few years back? On campuses one hotshot Guru was called Ram Dass. He was the son of either one of the founders or a president of Brandeis University; perhaps he was able to avoid being drafted on the basis he was a religious leader. When he visited Hofstra Uni-

versity, some kids from this neighborhood went to stand in the crowd listening to this freak and smoking pot. Ram Dass was harmless enough, but Pete Seeger and his Clearwater Crew stopped pumped storage of electricity and raised the price of energy for millions of Con-Ed customers (I have no Con-Ed stock.) and furthermore, if there had been pumped storage to draw on, the big Black Out in New York City and the concomitant destruction could probably have been avoided.

Things should be put in better perspective. Those of us unwilling to accept the pap that's ground up and fed to us as it comes from the can must search out the alternatives; we are forced to examine and question every public statement to try to figure out who gains how much if the public believes what it's told; it becomes necessary to analyze every move the politicians make, that business makes, that groups of workers make, to determine who the vested interests are, whose ox is getting gored, and why.

This isn't the way you and I were brought up to believe things are done in the United States. We were told freedom of the press would ensure all sides of a question would be presented. Freedom of the press is too little exercised today; it's a muscle, like any other, that will atrophy if not used.

Some will tell you the press has too much freedom; I think that's false. Much wider expressions of opinion should be published than is the case today.

Love,  
Oliver