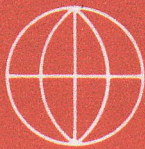


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JANUARY 25, 1975 TO THE POINT INTERNATIONAL

Letters

Letters

Chris Follett purports (vol. 1, issue 18) to give an account of Kåre Holt's most recent novel, *Kappløpet*. (Please observe the spelling; the reviewer had both the author and the book's title wrong). *Kappløpet* is a repulsive novel. Frequent references to recorded incidents serve the purpose of lending it an unearned air of documentary objectivity. Facts and fiction, half-truths and lies, mixed with the author's biased interpretations, are employed to paint an ugly picture of Roald Amundsen. Chris Follett commits the error of literally swallowing Holt's product hook, line and sinker. Uncritically, even gleefully, he accepts the wildly-distorted image of Roald Amundsen which Holt presents.

Kåre Holt's motive for writing this book is easy to comprehend. He wants to be a leveller. The very idea of Greatness is deplorable and unbearable to him. In Holt's ideal universe of anti-heroes, drop-outs and losers there could be no place for an individual with such exceptional qualities as Amundsen. Holt had to cut Amundsen down to his own proportions. So it's understandable — although by no means excusable — that he wrote the book.

One sees no rational explanation, however, for Follett's conduct. He actually manages to out-Holt Holt himself in mastering the ignoble Art of Smearing. Where is the motive? Why this weird display of such malice, ignorance and stupidity?

O.G. Skagestad, Oslo.

Letters

Your story on the progress of women (vol. 2, issue 1) was very interesting; but it's important to point out that there is still a long way to go. According to a report by the International Labour Office, a working woman today often earns only half as much as a man in the same job and, taking her home duties into account, sometimes works twice as long as her husband each week.

Inequities in pay are still the rule despite laws demanding equal pay for equal work. And even more important are the "institutional" inequities: Women are often handicapped by lack of vocational guidance: parents are more likely to pay for a son's education than a daughter's: and, in a time of widespread unemployment, women are often considered a threat. The labelling of women's and men's jobs is a major obstacle in achieving equality, especially as the wages for women's occupations are inevitably lower than men's.

I agree that things are improving, with the growing awareness. Projects like the ILO conference on labour equality and the United Nations proclamation of Year of Women can only help the improvement to continue.

Claudette Régni, Paris.

News item 1: Margaret Thatcher advised housewives in Britain to hoard tins of food as a hedge against rising prices. News Item 2: The Bangladesh government has introduced the death penalty for being found guilty of hoarding food.

How can you choose such a woman for your main story? Surely as an internationally recognised economist and a potential prime minister, she might well concern herself with global food problems rather than the narrow interests of suburban wives.

O. Lucien, Montevideo, Uruguay.

Will you please tell whoever made the contribution to your "Womanpower '75" story that Finland was not the first country in the world to give women the vote. This claim to fame belongs to New Zealand. Finland was the first only in Europe.

Seamus Marney, Wellington, New Zealand.

I want to tell you how much I enjoyed your story on architectural heritage year (vol. 2, issue 1). As an American living in Europe, I have become a great fan of old architecture. Everything from art nouveau to medieval Flemish style — each building is a remarkable gem. That unique beauty is something that modern architecture has not been able to capture. It was interesting, too, to note that your writer is an American because I have found that Americans seem to appreciate the beauty of European architecture more than the Europeans who have grown up with it. In any case, in the age of bad news, I was delighted to read some good news — the proclamation of heritage year.

Edward Fisch, Rotterdam.

I am already a subscriber to other news magazines; but yours is the most international. Unlike other magazines, which operate from New Delhi for South-East coverage, your correspondent is assigned to Ceylon. I wish to read reports which shed more light on Ceylon's Tamil problems and on their agitation against Sinhala government laws and regulations that make them second-class citizens. They have been agitating not only in Ceylon, but also in London, and drawing support from all over the East

and Far East. Unfortunately, British and American news media have blacked out this news and only a number of Western intellectuals are aware of it.

I have had a chance of reading your report (vol. 1, issue 13) entitled "Paddyfield purge". The fifth paragraph states that the Tamils predominant in the north and east parts of Ceylon were the descendants of tea and rubber plantation workers, brought by British planters from Tassiel Nadu. In fact, the Tamils were the descendants of warriors and merchants from the south Indian kingdoms.

The Tamil and Sinhalese communities were joined together under British rule and, when the British bowed out in 1948, no solution was provided for communal problems so that, under the so-called parliamentary system, the Tamil community had to accept Sinhala rule. It is evident that, only since 1948, have the Tamils had to submit to a system which has deprived them of self-government and, of adequate representation to protect their rights.

"Vijay", London.

A paper that brings to the reader's attention the Peking and Moscow infiltration in Africa (vol. 1, issue 19-20), without mentioning the Washington neo-colonialism of the so-called free world, is not worth a subscription.

Frank Colognese, Turin.

Chris Follett purports (vol. 1, issue 18) to give an account of Kare Holt's most recent novel, *Kappløpet*. (Please observe the spelling; the reviewer had both the author and the book's title wrong). *Kappløpet* is a repulsive novel. Frequent references to recorded incidents serve the purpose of lending it an unearned air of documentary objectivity. Facts and fiction, half-truths and lies, mixed with the author's biased interpretations, are employed to paint an ugly picture of Roald Amundsen. Chris Follett commits the error of literally swallowing Holt's product hook, line and sinker. Uncritically, even gleefully, he accepts the wildly-distorted image of Roald Amundsen which Holt presents.

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O.G. Skagestad, Oslo.

Did you intend, in your otherwise rather too-friendly Mobutu Profile (vol. 1, issue 19-20), to wreck the economy of Zaire by giving its currency unit a value of 50 US cents? As far as I know, one Zaire amounts to about two dollars. This is the normal rate at the Brussels Stock Exchange, and they still do a lot of business with the former Congo.

Francis Dumoulin, Brussels.

We did not intend to devalue the Zaire, but made the mistake of thinking, correctly, that one dollar equals 0.5 Zaire — and writing the opposite.