

ference to allow free emigration and to encourage tourism. According to the provisions of the law, private foreign travel is allowed each person once a year at most, but there are many people who are entirely denied the right to travel. For example, foreign travel may be forbidden to persons who "intend to visit someone who has been staying abroad illegally for a period of less than five years," or "who in the course of an earlier voyage behaved in a manner that is unworthy of a citizen of the Hungarian People's Republic," or who had been "previously convicted," etc. The Ministry of Interior has deprived several Hungarian citizens of the right to travel. Moreover, this was not even done on the basis of Statutory Rule No. 20, but the reasons given were based on Decree No. 53/1978 [XI.10]), par. 6, item 1 of the Council of Ministers, which stipulates that the applicant's foreign travel would be against "public order" or "public interest." Passport authorities almost never offer a more detailed explanation. Appeals are rejected on the same basis and—as noted above—the applicant may not contest his case in court.

Two examples: Sandor Lichtenstein, fifty-five, a production engineer who resides at Budapest, wanted to emigrate to Canada to join his wife and children. He possessed a visa and all the required certificates. However, his plea for family reunification was rejected by the authorities on the grounds that his travel "would be against the interest of the community." His efforts to obtain permission to emigrate have been unsuccessful since then.

The author of this paper, residing at Budapest, has been trying for the last nineteen years to obtain permission to visit his brother in England, but he has never received the passport necessary to travel to the West. His passport for socialist countries has been confiscated as well. The authorities cite the protection of "common interest" or the "public order" as the reason for rejection. A more detailed explanation has been denied to him to this very day.

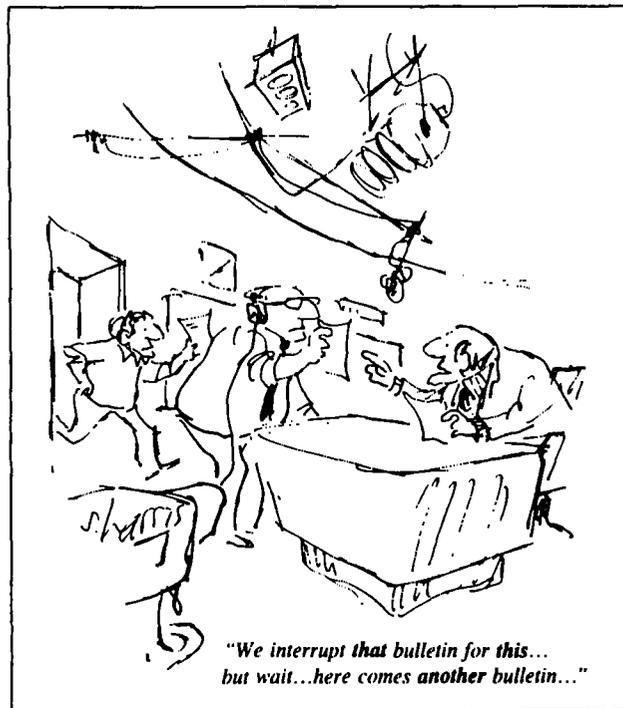
EXCURSUS 2

Thomas Land on ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT IN CHINA

China has embarked on a tree-planting project intended to turn a fifth of its territory into woodlands by the end of the century. The scheme represents a dramatic change from the "grains first" policy of the Mao era, which is blamed for a series of agricultural disasters forcing the country to seek international food aid. Its afforestation policy is aided greatly by Canada, a world leader in the field, under a three-year agreement of scientific cooperation signed some months ago in Peking.

The Chinese campaign was described during a Geneva conference concerned with the relentless decline of the earth's remaining forest cover. Many fear that, in the long term, the trend could lead to a permanent drought affecting the wheat-growing plains of the Northern Hemisphere—the great breadbaskets of North America and Europe. A forerunner of such a disaster appears to have hit China already, but specialists believe that the situation is still far from irreversible.

China's memorandum of agreement with Canada calls for cooperation in forest management, silviculture and regeneration, control of forest pests, tree genetics and improvement, forest-fire control, forest-harvesting operations,



and stand tending. The agreement also provides for exchange visits by scientists attached to the leading universities of both countries and for collaboration in research.

Chinese specialists blame the recent series of flood disasters in the Sichuan and Shaani provinces on a long-term policy of intense deforestation. The erosion of soil from the once wooded hillsides causes water to pour violently into the rivers at times of heavy rain, sweeping away villages, submerging towns, and drowning people, livestock, and crops.

Similarly, the prolonged drought in Heilongjiang Province, which produces a sixth of China's total wheat yield, is associated with massive forest and swamp-clearing operations in the area, apparently disturbing the transpiration process by which the land surface transfers water back to the atmosphere. The indiscriminate forest-clearing policy through which Maoist China once hoped to reduce its huge annual grain imports may thus have postponed the dream of agricultural self-sufficiency for even more years to come.

A party of scientists of many disciplines, brought together by the United Nations University for an advisory visit to a disaster area of Heilongjiang Province, were told that some two million hectares of land had been reclaimed there since the 1950s, leading to wind erosion, declining soil fertility, and a sharp drop in rainfall. The local water table had declined by more than two-and-a-half meters at some places. After a sandstorm whipped by winds approaching ninety kilometers per hour, the ditches along farm roads were filled with precious black topsoil from nearby fields. Elsewhere, thousands of hectares of wheat seedlings were swept away and buried.

One specialist describes the intensity of China's afforestation drive as a "green frenzy." A recent forest code makes unauthorized tree-felling a criminal offense and prescribes the compulsory planting of three trees in place of each one cut down. In all, China plans a great wall of trees over seven thousand kilometers long. The choice of pollution-resistant species provides the Chinese scientists and their Canadian collaborators with an opportunity for a gigantic experiment in environmental management.

Thomas Land writes from Europe on global affairs.