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## Paris Breaks Free

THE news from France has been so good ever since the landing in Normandy that the liberation of Paris was more surprising than exciting. It was surprising because it came a few days sooner than most people expected; but it was expected a little later, and this robbed it of some of its power to move us. Besides, Paris has seen so much and suffered so much, even in our own day, that it would be a little indecent to celebrate its release without some recollection of those things. It is no longer gay Paris but sad Paris, and we must not forget that its liberation means first of all an inquest into the causes of its long humiliation. One of the cable messages received in New Zealand on the day of its liberation, but written and dispatched the day before, described it as a "shabbier and tougher" city than the Paris of tradition, a city that the Allied soldiers would not find smiling, but tired, bitter, and sunk in recrimination. It could not be otherwise; and now that the Germans have fled, the problem of the Allied armies will be to restrain what one correspondent (quoting Burke) called "the old Parisian fury." That is not exactly the setting for a carnival of joy—if victory in war could ever bring unshadowed delight; but the occasion justifies sober rejoicing. Paris is free of occupying troops. It is hungry, but will be fed. If thousands of its bravest citizens have gone before their time to its cemeteries, and tens of thousands to enemy concentration camps, the millions who remain will piece their lives together again and the great city itself recover the light it has so long shed on the world. For this, and for all the other things its liberation means—free minds, free newspapers, free choice of leaders, and free speech in the streets—New Zealand rejoices with the rest of the free world. But it rejoices soberly, remembering the price at which freedom has been bought.

NEW ZEALAND LISTENER, SEPTEMBER 1

# LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

## CHINA

Sir,—Your leader on China in *The Listener* of July 14 is excellent in so far as it draws attention to the country, to which we in New Zealand owe a great debt, for had China submitted to the Japs, New Zealand to-day would probably be an occupied country. In other respects, however, the article is to be deplored. In the first place, whether you intended it or not, the inference to be drawn from your comments is that the Chinese Communists are to be blamed for disunity within China. While it may be true that they recently refused to attack the enemy (for it is impossible to be certain of news from China under present conditions), it is, in the light of past events, most unlikely. If space allowed, I could quote from the works of Edgar Snow, Lin Yutang, J. M. D. Pringle, Agnes Smedley, James Bertram, and others to support my statement, but I shall have to restrict myself to two points: firstly, it was the Communists who were mainly responsible for the formation of the United Front; secondly, accusations similar to this one have been levelled at the Chinese Communists before, and have been proved completely a reversal of the truth. It should also be remembered that as far back as 1939, the Central Government was reported to have had half a million troops watching the Communists, so that possibly the situation has not deteriorated so much as it might appear. In reading your leader, it is easy to overlook your early statement that exhaustion and isolation are the main factors in recent reversals met by the Chinese forces, for you do not recall attention to this in the latter portion of the article. That these are the most important factors is proven by the fact that following the arrival of American air assistance on the central front, some of these losses were vindicated. Only in your final sentence do you really hit a nail on the head—"... the political and economic problems of China ... are not insoluble, if friends help ...". Some of that help may be beyond our capacity, military aid for instance, but there are a number of worthwhile ways in which we can all assist, not least of which is by doing all we can to gain an informed, sympathetic understanding of China's problems and sufferings.

PHILIP MATTHEWS (Auckland).

[Our sole purpose was to convey the fact that the situation in China is disturbing. If our correspondent found anything else there he was looking for it.—Ed.]

## THE MAN BORN TO BE KING.

Sir,—H. H. Fountain and J. E. Dixon want to know why I do not believe and why I say that "The Man Born to be King" is not true. The books of the New Testament are full of supernaturalism, and they did not reach their present form until hundreds of years after the death of Christ. Most of the books are composite, with many interpretations and straight-out additions; some are pure religious fiction like John's gospel, Acts, 2nd Thessalonians, and 2nd Peter, with the result that they are nearly all contradictory, and require a special method of analysis to sort out the different documents used. Here is one reason for not accepting the gospels. In the Synoptics Jesus relates wonderful happenings that will take place: they shall see the Son of Man coming with power and great glory to set up the Kingdom of God on earth. Jesus admits that He does not

know the day, only the Father knows that, but He makes the definite promise that all this will happen during the generation they were living in (say 33 years) and that even some of them that were listening to Him would be alive when it happened. Was Jesus a false Prophet?

Now as to history and chronology. The New Testament is not history: we are dealing with tradition, and the chronology of the gospels is out from four to ten years, where we can check it. I never referred to discrepancies but mentioned contradictions, and I now cite the stories of the Nativity and Infancy of Jesus as told in Matthew and Luke, along with the two genealogies. Matthew makes the birth in at least 4 B.C. by including Herod the Great in his story, and Luke makes the birth 6—7 A.D. by mentioning the census taken by Quirinius. John complicates matters by the indirect statement that Jesus was not born in Bethlehem. Both these stories are a clear case of very late addition and must have been added after John's gospel was written. I wonder why Dorothy Sayers did not take Matthew Chap. 24 for the basis of a radio play; there are wonderful matter, wonderful situations, climax and anti-climax. Would it be because she knew what I have described above? Dorothy Sayers deliberately set out to shock her listeners, but I seem to have shocked two of them far more with a simple letter than she with twelve radio plays.

"ARGOSY" (Te Awamutu).

(This correspondence is now closed.)

## AN AUTHOR'S ROYALTIES.

Sir,—Your correspondent K. Annabell in commenting on the plays, *The Man Born to be King*, wonders what Dorothy Sayers does with the royalties from these plays, whose theme was not her creation. Here is an answer, by Dorothy Sayers herself, which she gives in *The Mind of the Maker*:

"It is true that he (the artist), like everybody else, derives remuneration from his work (though not, strictly speaking, profit in the financial sense of the word, since what he invests in his work is not money but time and skill, whose returns cannot be calculated in percentages). The remuneration is frequently beyond the amount necessary to enable him to go on working. What is remarkable about him is the way in which he commonly employs the escape-from-work which the extra remuneration allows him. If he is genuinely an artist, you will find him using his escape-from-work in order to do what he calls 'my own work', and nine times out of ten, this means the same work (i.e. the exercise of his art) that he does for money. The peculiar charm of his escape is that he is relieved, not from the work but from the money. His holidays are all busman's holidays."

XYZ (Wellington).

## "TWICKENHAM FERRY."

Sir,—In a book called *Peep Show of the Port of London* there is a picture of Twickenham with the small ferry at work, and reference is made to a song (by Theo Marzalls) of which "Twickenham Ferry" is the title and theme. Doubtless it is out of print. If one of your readers who remembers the story of the song would tell it I should be grateful.

"RICHMOND HILL" (Auckland).