

Why Don't We Speak?

A CORRESPONDENT wants to know why we are silent about Warsaw. We are pleased to tell him. We are silent for the reason that ought to keep him silent too: because we don't know the facts. We don't know why the patriots rose when they did, why help was not sent more liberally and more promptly, why Russia seemed to fluctuate between annoyance and indifference, why the patriots in the end preferred surrender to crossing the Vistula. We don't know the answer to any of those questions, and our correspondent does not know them either. It may easily be that the simplest and most innocent explanation is the true one: that the patriots rose because they heard the Russians at the gate, and expected to see them any day in the city, and that the Russians did not relieve them because they couldn't. So far we don't know. Nobody in New Zealand does, and comment without facts is not courage but impudence. If anyone wishes to know how difficult it is to obtain the facts even a generation after a battle or a war he will find it profitable to read a little book by Liddell Hart that has recently reached New Zealand: *Why Don't We Learn From History?* One of his examples is the case of a general in the last war who had lost his battle and who in his official account of it faked and inserted an impossible order to save his own reputation with posterity. That no doubt is an extreme and unusual case for modern times. But it is not gross corruption by generals that makes fact such an uncertain quantity: it is the deliberate, and universally approved, use of half-truths and misleading reports by all belligerent governments. It would be optimistic to think that anyone will know the true history of Warsaw's last two months by 1950; and Warsaw is a relatively simple problem. Who will know Rumania's war-story then, or Hungary's, or Bulgaria's, or Brazil's? And who will even pretend to know the story of Paris or of Rome?

LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

WARSAW

Sir,—I notice that you have had nothing at all to say of Warsaw, though the cables have been eloquent enough. Are you modest, or have your recent references to Poland "got you in bad" with certain people? If ever there was a case for comment by a courageous journalist, surely the loss of so many people by the folly or corruption of so few is one.—**SPEAK UP** (Wellington).
(We refer to this letter in our leading article.—Ed.).

SOLDIERS' SONGS

Sir,—To fill in the period of convalescence, some of us war-wounded are collecting poems and songs of the 2nd N.Z.E.F., composed in camp and also while overseas. We would be most grateful if any of your old-soldier readers would take the trouble to send their favourites—printable or unprintable—to add to our already wide-range collection.

BACK TO MUFTI

SPECIAL broadcasts on rehabilitation will be heard from next week onwards. Every Tuesday at 7.0 p.m. (beginning on October 17) the main National and Commercial stations will broadcast a programme called "Back to Mufti." The title of the first programme will be "Demobilisation: What it Means to the Returned Soldier."

Every Friday, again at 7.0 p.m. (beginning on October 20 with a talk about Trade Training for the Returned Soldier), stations will broadcast a brief statement on the various topics that concern the men and women who are returning to civil life.

It would be appreciated, too, if some indications could be given as to when and where the songs and poems were composed, for our record purposes.—**"FOUR KIWIS"** (Ward 11, Hutt Hospital, Wellington).

FREEDOM OF THE AIR

Sir,—Just recently we have had a discussion in Parliament on "The freedom of the Press," and although some members were disposed to be bellicose in their championship, no one seemed to mention "the freedom of the Radio." "The freedom of the Radio" has still to be won in New Zealand. The policy of "choke them off" is being largely adopted, and the lecturer now finds himself talking to a very much reduced audience. Politics, religion, and numerous subjects have their rightful place on the radio, but when those who now control the radio try to make a monopoly of propaganda, the listeners get fed up. Advertising over the air in a dignified, reasonable manner is quite acceptable, but the type of ingratiating advertising we are treated to simply "bores one stiff." Advertisements as given contradict each other. Can anyone imagine a company seriously advertising a commodity to advise people not to buy too much? The policy of "Truth in Advertising" is urgently required on the radio in New Zealand.

"ARGOSY" (Te Awamutu).

CHILDREN OF POLAND

Sir,—I wish to draw your attention to an inaccuracy in the article "Children of Poland" in your issue of September 8. Part of this article reads as follows: "There was no discrimination

in the education available, the way to knowledge was open to all, and efforts were made to facilitate the acquisition of it." As far as I know there was a strict *numerus clausus* towards Jewish students at the universities in Poland, so that thousands of students had to study at foreign universities.—**"TRUTH PREVAILS"** (Wellington).

[When the above letter was referred to the Consul-General of Poland, he stated: "With regard to the statement of 'Truth Prevails' that there was 'a strict *numerus clausus* towards Jewish students at the universities in Poland,' the only one which existed and which affected all, irrespective of creed, related to the places available at each of the five medical schools in the universities of Poland. As in New Zealand and in nearly every country in the world, the number of candidates flocking to medical training far surpassed the number of available vacancies. A special examination for admission was held each year to select from several hundred candidates the one hundred or so who could be accommodated. To my knowledge, as former student, lecturer and professor at two Polish universities, never was a discrimination made by the examining body on the ground of religion or nationality. Jewish students were represented in larger numbers than their ratio in the population."]

CATHEDRALS

Sir,—With interest I read A.M.R.'s article on the Gothic cathedrals of Northern France. It might be of interest to add that the rock used for building in the majority of cases is sandstone—it is soft, and therefore easily shaped and moulded. But it is very perishable, too, and in a city like Cologne, for instance, the high carbonic acid content of the atmosphere caused the rock to decay, and made continuous repairs necessary, so that the cathedral was hardly ever seen without a scaffolding. As A.M.R. points out, the Gothic style spread from Northern France to other countries. But in some areas, for example in the cities around the Baltic coast, sandstone was not available, and consequently, bricks had to be used. Obviously this material did not offer the same possibilities, with the result that 'brick-gothic' buildings appear more solid and almost clumsy in comparison with the ones built of sandstone, although the underlying idea and the technical principles are the same.

We all admire the creations of the Gothic period, yet they are really quite alien to us, since we live in an age predominantly interested in material things and economic problems, whereas the Gothic age was completely centred in God. Everything had the purpose of glorifying Him. And that is the only way we can understand the Gothic churches: as a pure expression of Christian faith, and they were to induce the people to believe. The discovery of the pointed arch, the flying buttresses and the rib-vaults made the large windows, open spaces, slender pillars possible, which give the whole building, especially the interior, a light, lofty appearance, an uplifting tendency. All the ornaments, the figures are used to glorify God; everything is symbol, the expression of living faith. Is there not something we could learn from that "Dark Middle Age?"

B. (Hamilton).

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

Concerto (Wanganui): The concerto was based on the "Lullaby of the Bells," an item heard earlier in the picture. It was composed by Edward Ward.

"Puzzled" (Dunedin): We are advised that the words used were these: "This movement leads without a break into the finale, which bursts with vitality and gaiety."