

AUGUST 30, 1946

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## War Histories

IT was courageous of General Kippenberger to begin his broadcast on the war histories by asking why there should be histories at all. We all want histories now; but the Editor-in-Chief's task is to arrange for the publication of books that we shall perhaps read in ten years, and that arouses the sceptics and cynics. Australia, they remind us, received the last volume of one war four years after another had started—a delay of 25 years. The 70 volumes of the official British history of 1914-18 took 28 years to write and are not all available yet. Our own histories of the same war help to make bargain-bundles at book sales; and so on. Well, everybody knows that these things are true, and that more things of the same kind could be added. But if it would be foolish to try to brush them away it would be ten times more foolish to accept them as the full story. What really counts in the end is that the truth should be told. If it can be told promptly, that means a short instead of a long wait in the dark; but it is the darkness that matters most and not the delay. Nor does it matter as much as we sometimes imagine that the whole truth should not reach everybody. The whole truth never does reach everybody on any subject at any time; but even the limited truth of a six-years' war is for those only who equip themselves to grasp it. For the rest of us it is sufficient to know that the little journeys we do make are made in the right direction — that we get nothing wrong even if we don't get everything right. There will be gaps in the record however long we wait, since the men responsible for some parts of the story died and took their secrets with them. Over them the darkness will remain. But within the limits of the possible what can be told will be, and our best guarantee of that is the scholarly care with which the facts are being assembled by the archivist-in-chief before they come under the review of the editor-in-chief.

## LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

### SOLOMON CONCERTS

Sir,—Many music lovers in this part of the country had hoped that one of Solomon's concerts might have been within their reach. Disappointed in this, could we not at least have our Napier radio station linked to re-broadcast his concerts from the more fortunate South Island towns? Several of Lili Kraus's recitals were spoilt for us by bad reception over the air. Wellington and Auckland main stations are generally heard well here, but when Parliamentary debates push visiting artists of the highest European standard on to Wellington's secondary station, our chances of enjoying their rare visits become remote. The South Island stations are also difficult to get except in ideal weather. Is it much to ask that Napier should re-broadcast for us this treat, which we are as keen to enjoy as those who are able to attend his concerts?

CECILIA J. A. GREENWOOD  
(Maraekakaho).

(We are informed that it is not possible to guarantee satisfactory reception conditions at Napier of the stations from which the Solomon concerts will be broadcast. The best possibility appears to be a re-broadcast by 2YH of the portion of the concert to be broadcast from Wellington on the 12th September. This is being arranged. The reception may not be satisfactory, but an attempt will be made as far as conditions allow to secure a good re-broadcast.—Ed.)

### BERTRAND RUSSELL

Sir,—It would seem hardly accurate to describe Bertrand Russell, as you did in your editorial of August 16, as a "near-Communist." Possibly without the hyphen and the capital C it might have been allowed to pass; with them it smacks a little of the "fellow-traveller." In 1920 he wrote in *The Practice and Theory of Bolshevism*: "I do not believe that by this (Moscow) method a stable or desirable form of Communism can be established. Three issues seem to me possible from the present situation. . . . The second is the victory of the Bolsheviks accompanied by a complete loss of ideals and a regime of Napoleonic imperialism." And later in the book: "If a more just economic system were only obtainable by closing men's minds against free inquiry and plunging them back into the intellectual prison of the middle ages, I should consider the price too high."

In 1924 in *Bolshevism and the West* he wrote: "I am afraid revolutions are a tribute to our sense of drama. . . . But that is not the way the really great work of the world is done. The great work of the world is a much less showy thing. And I believe that will be so also with the introduction of socialism into our western communities."

R.P. (Wellington).

Sir,—In his article, "In the Name of Democracy," published in your issue of August 16 Bertrand Russell is guilty of a shocking fallacy. He writes: "The Catholic Church has a system of dogmas from which it follows that the majority should be made Catholic; if these dogmas are true, any degree of force is justified in spreading the Catholic faith." Now it happens that one of the dogmas of the Catholic Church is that no adult may be received into the Church unless he freely accepts the Catholic faith. Consequently, it does not follow that, if the dogmas of the

Church are true, any degree of force is justified in spreading the Catholic faith. Russell has something of a reputation as a logician; evidently then one can be a logician without being logical. This initial fallacy leads him to write more nonsense when he puts Catholic dogma on the same level as Communism, as if it were a political creed to be imposed by force. Russell, like so many other rootless intellectuals who prate about individual liberty, has never understood that our western love of liberty is the fruit of an age-long acceptance of a Catholic dogma, viz., the dogma that every person has his own eternal destiny which he must work out by the use of his free will.

G.H.D. (Greenmeadows)

Sir,—The *Listener* is adjusted to the mind of our middle class and bunny rabbitry in general.

TRADE UNION MIND (Auckland).

### H. G. WELLS

Sir,—I beg leave to wag my head over your H. G. Wells Editorial, to divide it like Gaul in three parts, and to itemise it as follows:

1. Trivialities, namely, his birthday and diabetes.
2. Things best not said, i.e., the senility of the personal attacks on Hoare, Vansittart, and Acland in 42 to 44.
3. Undue emphasis on reforming zeal, "died fighting for the unlimited right, etc."

In all humility I suggest there were better wares to display. Was this a picture of the man who entertained us with

More letters from listeners will be found on pages 28 and 29

the flaring horror of "The Cove" and the creeping evil of "Pollock and the Porroh Man"; a picture of a writer never surpassed as an artist of the short story?

In short, the consummate storyteller of the age was dismissed as a diabetic reformer and I was cheated of my usual weekly *bonne bouche* in your Editorial.

VINCENT COUNTY (Eastbourne).

### "WHY DRAG IN SHAKESPEARE?"

Sir,—After reading Professor Sinclair's article on the film *Henry V.* my immediate reaction was to ask "Why drag in Sinclair?" Falstaff on his deathbed, as the Professor reminds us, "babbled of green fields." The Professor, presumably hale and hearty, babbled of precisely nothing.

His admission that he has seen only three or four films in the last ten years speaks volumes. One can imagine him as he wrote it whispering, "and proud of it." The pity is that some people might be disposed to take him seriously.

On re-reading his article I can scarcely believe he is serious, some of his remarks are so amazing. For example:

"Besides I did not see how Shakespeare and technicolour could be made to mix." Shakespeare as a stage spectacle is technicolour.

It may be of interest to the Professor that Laurence Olivier who devised and produced this film is one of the leading Shakespearean actors in England to-day and was acclaimed by the critics in London last year for his acting in the stage production of *King Henry IV.*

The Professor's final remark strikes right at the heart of the matter:

"The spectacle is well enough in its own way—that is, for children."

Shades of Will Shakespeare! If we had more Laurence Oliviers and fewer Professor Sinclaires, Shakespeare would to-day take his rightful place in the affections of the masses, instead of being regarded as something dry as dust, due mainly to the way it is unintelligently forced down the throats of school children. After all it is the child in every-one of us which helps to send us to the theatre, whether it be Shakespeare as a stage production or the latest thriller film. Better far for Olivier to attract both children and grown-up children to Shakespeare with his film of *King Henry V.* than for Sinclair to drive them away with his purism.

G. E. PERRY (Wellington).

### LILI KRAUS

Sir,—I strongly disagree with E. Frost's (Hamilton) criticism of the announcer of Lili Kraus's broadcast concert from Dunedin. My reception of the whole concert was excellent, and was certainly not marred by the announcer—on the contrary. My own criticism would be given to the announcer of the Wellington broadcast, who perhaps imagined we had the programme before us. He told us much of the applause—which we could hear only too well—but little of the programme. So one cannot please everybody. However, many thanks to the National Broadcasting Service for giving us the privilege of hearing such a great artist.

BRIDGET BODLE (Auckland).

### A TRIBUTE

Sir,—Accept the thanks of one who has been a lover of verse from his childhood, now some four score years or so ago, for the publication of the lines by Nancy Bruce of Wanganui to Lili Kraus. Many of your readers must have rejoiced to see so perfect a tribute to the perfect pianist.

GRATEFUL (Dunedin).

### "WAR RECORD"

Sir,—In your leading article published under date August 2, you state that a publication entitled *War Record* has been delivered to every New Zealand home. This is an error, as my home for one has not received a copy; nor have I been able to find anyone who has received a copy. Possibly the publishers or distributors do not recognise Dunedin as part of New Zealand, but as you have evidently been misled I think it as well to let you know.

As this is presumably a Government publication, I shall no doubt at least have the honour of sharing in the cost of production; perhaps you would let your subscribers know, through your columns, how they may obtain their copies.

QUIDNUNC (Dunedin).

(We are informed that distribution is going on as fast as the Post Office can handle it, and that every householder will have received a copy within a few days. It will of course be understood that people living in rooms or flats may not always be included in deliveries on a "household" basis.—Ed.)

### ANSWER TO CORRESPONDENT

"Music Lover" (Wellington).—The scoring out of front seats in the stalls was to cancel from the plan, which was an old print, certain front rows which have not been in existence since the stage was extended in the hall renovation three years ago. Seats reserved elsewhere were for official guests.

### NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENT

Laksmire, Waipukurau: Letter awaits you. Please send address, which has been lost.