

# LISTENER

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## Nuremberg

THE judgment of Nuremberg has not been swift, but it has certainly been sharp — not quite sharp enough for Moscow, but sharper than many people in New Zealand will have expected after all these months of delay. Whether hanging is a more appropriate punishment than shooting is open to question, but it is more unpleasant, and a concession to the demand for humiliation as well as death. No one will doubt that such a punishment was deserved, but it is possible to regret that justice should in any circumstances at all seem to be tinged with vengeance. The real point however is that punishment has overtaken the authors of so many calculated crimes against civilisation. Legally the judges have had to venture in some places on to rather thin ice, but it was better to take that risk than the risk of letting it be said that humanity could not defend itself against such outrages as these criminals have made it endure. The day will come when Nuremberg will be one of the landmarks on humanity's tortuous path from the wilderness in which it has been floundering for two generations to a freer and cleaner world. In the meantime it has been established that justice can, and will, meet such a hideous challenge as the Nazis hurled at it, and that it is not necessary to fire a shot to become a murderer. The full implications of the judgment require longer study and fuller knowledge than most of us can give to it, but this at least is clear—that it outlaws aggressive war and establishes civilisation's power as well as its will to say that human beings shall not be degraded and tortured and mutilated and murdered to make the world safer for savages.

## LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

### OUR CROSSWORD PUZZLES

Sir,—It is with great pleasure that myself and friends saw your note announcing the renewal of the very entertaining crossword puzzles by R.W.C. We do appreciate these very much indeed: they seem to be just right, not too easy and not too difficult.

### "APPRECIATIVE"

(Christchurch).

### VIVA SORENSEN!

Sir,—I would like to express my appreciation of J. H. Sorensen's series *Life in the Sub-antarctic*. As soon as *The Listener* arrives I look for an article. It will be a sad day when they finish. Long live Mr. Sorensen! H. A. DIXON

(Hikurangi).

(We are as sad as our correspondent that next week's article will be the last, at least for a time. Mr. Sorensen feels that he has exhausted his present material, but he may be returning later to the sub-antarctic to gather some more.—Ed.)

### BERTRAND RUSSELL

Sir,—J. L. Winchester, in attacking Bertrand Russell's timely article, defining Russian and other forms of "democracy," lets his Marxist emotionalism overcome his reason. He optimistically declares Marxism to be "true," and that it is continuing its "world-conquering march" in Australia, Britain, America and Greece, for instance, or even little New Zealand. Is it because it is progressing backwards so fast that its annoyance has to be registered in all the widespread mischief-making and violence that goes so consistently with Marxism? This apostle of violence preached his "peaceful" policy in these words in his "Die Neue Rheinische Zeitung": "We are ruthless . . . when our time comes revolutionary terrorism will not be sugar-coated. . . . There is but one way of simplifying, shortening and concentrating the death agony of the old society as well as the bloody labour of the world's new birth—revolutionary terror." Originally, Communists paraded to us the kindly Soviet eye-wash: "From everyone according to his ability and to everyone according to his need." Now we must quote Stalin himself rubbing this in: "What is the cause of industrial unrest? It is the demand for equal incomes, which makes the unskilled man lose all interest in being skilled and in the prospect of advancement. Incomes must be paid according to work done, and not according to need." So now we have manual workers varying in income amongst themselves from 10 to 1, and brain workers 200 to 1. The high ethical standard of Marx's idolised disciple, Lenin, we can gauge from Lenin's own words (from his "Left-Wing Communism"): "It is necessary to be able to agree to any and every sacrifice, and even—if need be—to resort to all sorts of devices, manoeuvres and illegal methods, to evasion and subterfuge, in order to penetrate into the trade unions, and to carry on Communist work in these at all costs." Is this the "world-conquering march"—and aren't they still attempting it?

"BRITON" (Christchurch).

Sir,—As "G.S.P." does not "desire to become embroiled in a religious argument," I shall respect his wishes and stick to logic, a subject to which he has evidently devoted a certain amount of study. He says that I have "merely

pointed out that Russell's premiss is false and not that the inference is invalid." As a matter of fact, I pointed out that Russell's argument was fallacious in the strict sense of the term, i.e., his conclusion did not follow from his premisses. Russell wrote: "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." Thus, from "should be made Catholic" in the premiss, Russell infers "should be made Catholic by force" in the conclusion. Is that any clearer? The fallacy could be classified as "Latius hos"—asserting more in the conclusion than is warranted by the premisses, or it could perhaps be described as equivocation, based on the double meaning that can be given to the word "made."

Since Mr. Williams' acquaintance with Catholicism is so slight that he thinks it comparable to the religion of Ancient Egypt, it would be wasting my time and your space to attempt to enlighten him on the subject. I spoke of our "western love of liberty"; Mr. Williams seems to think he has contradicted me by referring to the love of liberty that "existed for millions of years before religion was thought of"—presumably in the breasts of dinosaurs or mastodons. The logic is rather curious.

G.H.D. (Greenmeadows).

(This correspondence is now closed.—Ed.)

### "MENTAL BAD TASTE"

Sir,—After reading the correspondence in your issue of September 13 I feel mental equivalent of "a bad taste in the mouth."

There is G.H.D. who among other things claims that people must believe the dogmas of his Church because so many great minds have done so—there are a number of great minds which have not believed in those dogmas (for instance, Plato, Socrates and Buddha, none of whom was a Christian) and it is obvious you can reach no conclusion by that line of argument. A logical person would never raise it.

Then there is F. Blomfield who once again sets forth the thesis that knowledge has no place in appreciation. It may be that the layman and the botanist have an equal appreciation of the beauty of the flower, but the botanist by reason of his expert knowledge can appreciate so much more than just the superficial beauty that the total enjoyment and stimulation he receives is incomparably greater than that of the layman. The same line of argument applies to any other aspect of human experience be it watching a football match, listening to music or looking at one of the visual arts.

And again there is Ian Hamilton who attempts to pour scorn on M. H. Holcroft's *Encircling Seas* and E. H. McCormick's appreciation of all of Holcroft's contributions to New Zealand literature. Whether you agree with Mr. Holcroft or not, it is obvious to anyone who reads his work that he has thought deeply about the development of New Zealand writing and he has expressed his conclusions clearly with the addition of some interesting speculations about its future.

The two extracts quoted by Ian Hamilton as "such stuff" and on which he

hangs the whole of his argument that the book is incomprehensible and/or reprehensible, are in fact quite clear in meaning. They may be slightly involved in construction, but then Mr. Holcroft was writing, presumably, for people who can understand words of more than one syllable and sentences with more than one clause.

G. KEMBLE WELCH (Kohu Kohu).

### ART AND THE COMMON MAN

Sir,—A. R. D. Fairburn has struck the rock of truth when he affirms that art must be related in some measure to the experience of the common man. It is good to hear a practising artist of the abilities of Mr. Fairburn speaking thus. It is certainly a healthy contrast to the attitude of the arty "snob-mob" who affect art as they affect what they imagine is a cultivated accent. They speak of art in terms which are quite, I suspect, deliberately unintelligible to the ordinary commonsense. It is a deity to be worshipped behind the veil that guards the Holy of Holies. They are its high priests, the oracular few to whom, alone, are its mysteries to be revealed, which is all a lot of bunkum. Art as a manifestation of culture must run deep in the stream of a people's consciousness, the best art is that which has sprung directly from their experience—the folk art, a form which no sophisticated artist, not even A. E. Housman in his *Shropshire Lad*, has ever succeeded in mastering completely. It is something that comes naturally both to the expression and the appreciation of the people (New Zealand has no such art, not even a song with the splendid rolling lilt of a "Waltzing Matilda" to evoke the flavour of her life. It is a serious lack).

On the other hand an appreciation of sophisticated art demands some measure of sophistication, in that it must be a taste acquired by learning something about art; here, as Mr. Fairburn has said, the gulf between the artist and the common man may best be bridged by the practise of the arts by the common man.

It is perhaps too late to re-educate adult New Zealand, but we could teach our children to love the arts so that they may grow up sensible of the power of thought and beauty and truth over the human mind and ultimately of sense prevail over human destiny.

Yet even if they learn all this, it may be a lesson learnt too late in human history. They used goats at Bikini, but that was just a dress rehearsal and the goats were acting as understudies for the part we are doomed to play. So perhaps we should throw in the sponge, say farewell to beauty, and acclaim the jitterbug. "SARRAS" (Ellerslie).

### ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

J. S. Hildyard (North Auckland): It was not suggested that the house was his birth-place, but simply that he spent his boyhood there. We are assured that this is correct, that he went there and lived there as a boy.

"In Outer Darkness" (Auckland): (1) In fixing the date of the concert the factors which had to be taken into consideration were the availability of the soloist, the conductor, the hall, and travel facilities. These limited very severely the choice of dates. (2) The concert in the hall cost no part of your licence fee. (3) There is not the slightest intention or official desire that the activities of the National Orchestra shall be concentrated in Wellington.

P.T.E. (Wellington): Thank you for the suggestion. We shall bear it in mind, but it is doubtful if sufficient people would be interested enough to justify the work involved.

D. E. A. Brown (Auckland): Thanks, but for various reasons, impracticable.

Crossworder (Ngatamahine): Point referred to R.W.C.