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March

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November

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SOLIDOGRAPH Shockproof, Dustproof, Anti-Magnetic.

LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

(Continued from page 5)

MONEY AND FOOD

Sir,—In a recent issue I read with great interest the remarks of Sir John Boyd Orr on the diets of the people of Britain before the latest war. He said, inter alia, "For health you'd want foods with plenty of vitamins in them such as milk, eggs, fruit, and vegetables, but they'd cost you twice as much. Hence, the poorer the family, the less they could buy of the more costly but quite essential vitamin-rich foods." In reading these words my thoughts flashed back to the recently-reported words of Mr. B. V. Cooksley, who said (I quote from memory): "In normal times Britain produces enough vegetables for her needs and even does a considerable overseas trade." There seems to be here a marked difference of opinion as to what constitutes Britain's needs in the way of vegetables. Mr. Cooksley no doubt is referring to the amount which the markets can absorb, an amount strictly governed by the income of the people. Sir John, however, would no doubt define Britain's need as the minimum amount required for the proper health of all its people. Apparently with food as with so many other things, we shall see no real progress until we cease to think of money only and base our economic plans solely on the people's needs.

E.R.D. (Wellington).

"FREEDOM OF THE PRESS"

Sir,—Many thanks to "A.M." for his excellent little article on the above subject. Personally, I see no reason why the Press ought to have any more rights than any ordinary citizen. If an editor expresses an opinion with which I do not agree, I claim that I, with the same rights and privileges and obligations, should have precisely the same right to express the opposite opinion. If not, why not? So long as they are prepared to grant me this right, the more "opinions" they express the better I will like them. As a socialist, I claim the right to speak, I claim the right to read, I claim the right to write, and I claim the right to hear. That is what I would call "the four freedoms." Where an individual, or a group of individuals, are attacked by the Press, then that individual or group of individuals ought to have the right of reply. The real power of the Press consists far more in its power to suppress than in its power to express.

One would think, to hear the Press talk about Freedom, that it was some sort of sacred right granted to them, but denied to others. That is not so. Stephen Leacock, the Canadian economist and humourist, said: "It is the easiest thing in the world to run a newspaper; all you have to do is to publish a statement to-day, which you know isn't true, and contradict it to-morrow." The recent debacle of the Tories in England proves to my mind that the Press is not nearly so powerful as it thinks it is.

SOCIALIST (Palmerston North).

"WAR RECORD"

Sir,—I was very pleased to read "Quidnunc's" protest at the non-receipt of above, as I also have been wondering at the delay. Although the editorial footnote explains this delay, it also implies

that people who live in rooms or flats are not likely to receive a copy. This seems, to say the least, very arbitrary, as the Post Office or whichever Government department is responsible for the distribution, must be aware that 50 per cent. (more or less) of the population live in rooms or flats, chiefly on account of their inability to procure houses; therefore through no fault of their own do not come into the privileged category of "householder" and are thus debarred from obtaining what is as rightfully theirs as the more fortunate, but no more deserving, half of the people. It must be remembered also that many of the former are returned soldiers and their wives. I wish to add to "Quidnunc's" request for information of where it is possible to obtain a copy of "War Record."

FLAT FISH
(Christchurch).

(This letter was referred to the Information Officer, Prime Minister's Department, who replied as follows:

"I would like to correct the impression that people who live in flats or rooms are not likely to receive a copy of War Record because they do not come into the category of 'householders.' The Post Office states that sufficient copies are left at each house or flat to cover all boarders who receive mail at that address. If mail is not regularly addressed to a man at his boarding-house, and the postman therefore does not know of his existence, no copy would be left for him. Distribution of the copies delivered at a boarding-house thus depends on the landlady. I should be glad if you would let it be known that copies are obtainable from the Information Officer, Prime Minister's Department, Wellington.")

REPORT ON RUSSIA

Sir,—Having read in your issue of September 20 the most recent result of your scavenging in the refuse tip of anti-Sovietism, I can only say that while Russell's contribution was stale this latest is smelly.

Stealing a sentence from G. B. Shaw I would say that the editorial which accompanied "Report on Russia" was "the pompous oracle with nothing to say, the noodle's oration, the twaddler's pulpit platitudes," and I trust that this letter does not fall within Shaw's final category of "the ranter's tirade."

The first inexactitude in the article (and your editorial) is that of calling the U.S.S.R. "Russia." Without being unduly formal may I point out that the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic is only one of the 16 republics in the Soviet Union; thus it is no more correct to call the U.S.S.R. Russia than it would be to call the U.S.A., Texas.

There can be no point in attempting to refute the mis-statements of Atkinson. Let me only add that your objectivity is seriously called in question by the very concoction of hacked-up paragraphs torn from context in which you present the material of Atkinson, Zaslavsky, and The New Yorker.

If you really desire information on the Soviets which you can pass on to your readers, I suggest that you negotiate for and publish in serial form some well-informed and objective treatise such as that of S. and B. Webb. This course would ensure that for several years one portion at least of your publication was free from some of the nonsense which too frequently clutters its pages.

MAX BOLLINGER (Upper Hutt).

(We go half-way with Shaw. Guess which half.—Ed.)