

Democracy and Dissent

EVERY democracy in the world to-day is in trouble with communists, and every communist knows why. It is one of those unequal contests morally in which one side has scruples and the other only aims. Where the communists are a considerable proportion of the population, as they are in Europe, democracy is threatened with extinction. Where they are a handful only, as in America and all British communities, democracy's problem is not survival, but survival in a reasonably pure form. It is easy enough to say that those who make trouble deserve a taste of it, but it is one thing to know what communists deserve and another thing to decide what democrats can afford to do to them. The view of the best democrats so far has been that they can't retain their democratic principles and punish others for doing what democracy itself permits. It is a precious principle, but in crises very dangerous. It allows communists to establish themselves in the democracies and work there till they become a menace; but it does not allow democracy then to throw them out neck and crop. They still have the protection of the law and of the democratic tradition. To a communist that is romantic nonsense. When democracy protects him it does so at its own peril, and since he has no intention, if his own day comes, of protecting it in return, its softness is just another sign to him that it is not fit to survive. He will destroy it if and when he can, and because that is his ineradicable purpose, he has put democracy on the spot. If it throws him out it muddies its own stream. If it leaves him alone, trusting in the good sense of the public, and in the superiority of its own way of life, it is maintaining the liberal tradition unbroken, continuing on a road from which no one has successfully driven it in the past, but at the same time committing an act of faith for which history provides no ready parallel.

LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

A LISTENER'S QUESTIONS

Sir,—With reference to a letter published in your issue of May 7 from "Nosey Parker," of Nelson, we wish to point out that the phrase used in the *Broadcasts to Schools News Talk* was "(the Cingalese) are an Aryan people as we are" and not "very arrogant like we are," as quoted by your correspondent.—JEAN W. COMBS (Officer-in-Charge, Broadcasts to Schools).

MUSIC AND THE REST

Sir,—Surely it was a pity to publish the ignorant and unkind letter written by M. E. Jones while Miss Isobel Baillie was still in our hospitable country. Happily, M. E. Jones and his ilk are in the minority, for Miss Baillie has been appreciated by crowded audiences wherever she has been and we who have not had the privilege of attending her concerts in person have appreciated every broadcast. As for the National Orchestra, well—give us more. It is good indeed to hear such music.

"ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT" (Nelson).

CHEAPER HOUSES

Sir,—What type of soil does Mr. Ammer (*Listener*, April 23) consider necessary for the building of *pisé* houses? Does it mean the removal of topsoil from potential suburban gardens? If so, the commercial market gardeners of the Dominion should be mobilised to support this programme.

G. ARDENER (Otorohanga).

G.T. AND P.T.

Sir,—As one who is familiar with Gisa Taglicht's method of Rhythmical Gymnastics, I was delighted that an opportunity would be available to demonstrate her work through the medium of the screen. I was, however, disappointed in the nature of the article published in *The Listener*, because it gives so little conception of the scope and spirit of the work, and is even guilty of implying that G.T. encourages a cheap form of picturesqueness. Nothing could be more foreign to her approach to recreational work and on enquiry I discovered that she had not been offered even the basic courtesy of preliminary consultation on the composition of the article I refer to. It is a pity that an opportunity has been missed to prepare the public adequately for such an unusual production and I can only hope that the film itself will more truly reflect the fundamental basis of this method.

VALERIE LOCKWOOD,

(Secretary, Wellington Branch of Physical Education Society).

(Our article was written to inform the public about the film, not to "prepare" it for rhythmical gymnastics. According to our film critic, the public is bearing up satisfactorily. Ed.)

LUNAR HORTICULTURE

Sir,—The most fertile dates this month for sowing seeds are from 4.15 p.m. on the —th to 1.39 a.m. on the —th, and from 11.10 p.m. So announces 12B every Saturday at 12.59 p.m. This pretentious accuracy, with its inference that the time could be given to a split second, to me savours so much of humbug that I am impelled to ask: (1) Who supplies this information and what are his qualifications for this

extraordinary work? (2) Does the Government, through the NZBS, pay for this information and thus inferentially approve of it? (3) Is this horticultural science (?) approved by the Department of Agriculture, or by the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research or by the Royal Society of New Zealand? If so, why does not the Department of Agriculture, in broadcasts and by instructors, emphasise and re-emphasise its importance to farmers?

In short, is this ZB broadcast scientific fact or merely a revival of centuries old astrology and witchcraft?

CURIOUS (Auckland).

(We are informed that the information is "merely passed on" in the Gardening Session but that the Gardening Expert does not endorse it.—Ed.)

MORE HUMOUR

Sir,—May I be allowed to add my request to that of Sandy Powell (Timaru) for a little more humour in our radio programmes. We hear that visitors to this country pass remarks about the mournful expression on our faces. Well let them listen to most of our radio programmes at night and they will find one reason for it. We have four stations on the air every night in Auckland, but tune in to any one of them and you will hear the same mournful music. I do not wish to deprive people who like that sort of entertainment from listening to it; but surely, with four stations on the air at the same time, we could have one station which could cater for those who still like good old-fashioned British music and humour.

F. SEDGLEY (Devonport).

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Sir,—The short story, "Hear the Penalties Dropping," seems, perhaps unintentionally, to convey an impression of the Sunday School teacher as a harmless, well-meaning, incompetent instructor of children. No doubt there were and are such, just as there were and are in other educational circles. The characterisation of Miss Wilkie, however, does not present a composite picture of the religious educator. In some respects the Sunday School has led the way, notably in the matter of small classes, and I think it is correct to say that the "project" method was used in the Sunday School before it reached the day school. The Sunday School has at times been subjected to the cheap sneers of the unthinking and uninformed, and I trust, therefore, for the sake of a more balanced picture, you will permit a few opinions to be quoted, dating from about the same period as the story—opinions, not of religious leaders, but of a Governor-General, of statesmen and other secular leaders. Lord Bledisloe said he was "a profound believer in the efficacy of Sunday Schools as a powerful instrument in building up a nation of robust, God-fearing men and women and loyal, devoted patriots." One Prime Minister (Mr. G. W. Forbes) referred to "this great work . . . the foundation on which our boys and girls may build an upright character." His predecessor, W. F. Massey, said the Sunday Schools were "sowing the seeds of loyal citizenship." The Hon. W. Downie Stewart said it was "a work of great national importance." A Director of Education (T. B.

Strong) referred to it as "of vital importance to the welfare of the State," Mr. Justice Adams as "an invaluable service to our country," a Mayor of Christchurch ("Dan" Sullivan) as "a most valuable national service." The Mayor of Auckland (G. W. Hutchison) said it was in these schools "that the foundations of righteousness and honour are laid, without which no country can be truly great." The Commissioner of Taxes (E. J. R. Cumming) thought it "the most worthwhile work any citizen can undertake," and Frank Milner, late Rector of Waitaki Boys' High School, said "it roots character to a spiritual basis."

A. H. REED (Dunedin).

HELP FOR BRITAIN.

Sir,—Much has been done to aid Britain, but after listening to Donald McCullough's very impressive St. George's Day broadcast I wonder if we could not do something more. Here in New Zealand we have an abundance which appears almost shocking to those who have experienced shortages overseas. Instead of, or as well as, sending food would it not be possible to inaugurate a scheme whereby women and children from Britain could be brought in relays to New Zealand for three months' holiday? My idea is to start camps on the lines of our Children's Health Camps. An issue of "Aid to Britain" stamps, like the Health stamps, would give every man, woman and child in New Zealand an opportunity of helping, and I am sure there are many people who would be willing to give their services voluntarily in the actual running of the camps.

There is so much that we are unable to send to Britain, but which we would gladly share with others. We managed to help Polish children during the war—why not British women and their children now?

C.R. (Dunedin).

"KING LEAR" FROM 1YA

Sir,—May I express the appreciation many listeners have felt at the very enjoyable broadcast of excerpts from *King Lear* and extend congratulations to those responsible for such an outstanding entertainment. It was a treat to hear Shakespeare's play so vividly portrayed, and so cleverly adapted to radio. I understand that the players were local artists, and their performance deserves the highest praise and encouragement. We know that we have many local artists, talented people, who seldom come before the microphone, and I would suggest that they are capable of giving us more of this type of programme.

A. C. WEBSTER (Auckland).

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

Ajax (Manurewa): An attached card is not the equivalent of a signature.

E. de L. (Timaru): In an austere world, culture must unfortunately make some compromise with commercialism.

J. Bingham (Christchurch): The records which you heard were privately owned and lent to the station for that particular session. They are, however, on order for the NZBS and, when copies are received will be available to all stations.

A. de L. (Timaru): The music for *Men of God* was specially composed by Maurice Jacobson and is still in manuscript form; the score for the film *Tom Brown's Schooldays* was by Anthony Collins and, so far as we know, it also is unpublished. John Gielgud's address is Foulslough Farm, Finchfield, Essex.