

# NEW ZEALAND LISTENER

Incorporating N.Z. RADIO RECORD

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## Lead or Gold?

IF we may accept the summary sent to New Zealand by cable, a well-known war correspondent made the outrageous suggestion last week in London that the war in Syria would have ended long ago if Britain had used gold and silver bullets instead of lead. It is true that money-bags have sometimes to be used as make-weights in the desperate crises of war, but to boast about their use in the past, and suggest that we should buy our way through Syria to-day instead of fighting our way through is as insulting to the French as it is to us. It is also monstrous to suggest that Lawrence succeeded in Arabia merely because he went there with "handfuls of gold." We are not yet so decadent that we have to hire ruffians to fight for us against a civilised power.

But it is one thing to use gold as an agent of corruption and another thing to use it as a war weapon. A single ounce of gold can be converted into a rifle, into twenty bayonets, or into a thousand loaded cartridges; a hundred ounces would make twenty machine-guns; a thousand ounces a Hurricane fighter. Such conversions are being made every day and every night, and the process will continue without ceasing till the war ends. But we carry the rifles and pilot the 'planes. We stand up to the bullets and bombs of our enemies. We do not sit in safety at home and barter our gold for someone else's blood. It pleases Hitler to say that we do, but it is astonishing to find a British war correspondent saying, and a British newspaper allowing him to say, that gold is better armament than conviction and courage.

We must use gold to the utmost, or we shall be defeated. But we shall also be defeated if our chief use of it is to corrupt. It is the most disgusting of all forms of defeatism to suggest that grease on our enemy's palm will protect us from the bullets in his gun.

# LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

Letters sent to "The Listener" for publication should be as brief as possible, and should deal with topics covered in "The Listener" itself. Correspondents must send in their names and addresses even when it is their wish that these should not be published. We cannot undertake to give reasons why all or any portion of a letter is rejected.

## DOCTORS AND OSTRICHES.

Sir,—In his article "No more diphtheria," the Director of School Hygiene boldly asserts that "diphtheria is caused by a germ," and that anyone who disagrees "is an ostrich." Now, Sir, there must be thousands of parents in New Zealand who not only disagree, but would even proclaim that it is this doctor himself who has his vision buried in the sand of medical orthodoxy.

The cause of diphtheria (or any other disease), according to enlightened medical opinion, is insufficient natural resistance in the subject attacked. The synthetic resistance, pumped into weakly systems from test tubes (as the doctor suggests) can never adequately take the place of the natural resistance that is built with the attainment of radiant good health. Dope, sera, and vaccines, in the long run do nothing but upset nature's efforts towards balance of health—and our Health Department actually suggests that even our toddlers be doped with this laboratory stuff! No wonder all our hospitals are overtaxed to contend with the increasing upsets to the natural balance of health, of systems already doped to dizzy exhaustion.

The natural resistance of real health comes from the balance of our physical and our spiritual requirements. On the one hand we need common-sense obedience to natural laws (especially as regards food and hygiene), and on the other hand, we must cultivate the vital spiritual vitamins from faith in the promise of the Creation to provide "life abundant."

Let our Health Department then inject into our less fortunate kids something more promising than what the doctor proposes. Let it show a larger practical appreciation of the real cause of disease, and seek to indicate to harassed parents the only real approach to "abundant life"—health and happiness.—MUM AND DAD (Motueka).

(DR. TURBOTT REPLIES: "Your correspondents would rely on common sense, natural laws and faith. Would they still depend on these if their child was attacked by diphtheria? Will these or anti-toxin save the child? Everybody knows nowadays that the germ-produced anti-toxin saves life. Then there is surely no objection to extending the principle to prevention of the disease; the employment of tiny quantities of toxoid does exactly what your correspondent wants, raises the natural resistance of the subject. Keeping the body healthy, adequately nourished, well housed, etc., is important, but however perfect this care is, it will not stop the personal contact of child with child—in school, on the playground, at pictures—nor prevent the personal spread of disease by droplet infection from those carrying the germs in mouth, throat and nasal passages.")

## LITERATURE AND RACE

Sir,—J. K. Alexander has written an emotional letter to castigate Mr. Gilbert for "the emotional use of a meaningless word—race." Apparently in his anxiety to blink such a huge and disturbing fact as race, Mr. Alexander prefers to ignore it even in literature. Mr. Gilbert has said "that in writing about people and places, all the writer has to orient himself is his race." If Mr. Gilbert means by "race" (and I presume he does), that mass of cultural heritage and custom which every nation possesses, his statement is almost axiomatic. The writer's outlook and the mechanics of his writing and his mode of expression must certainly be influenced by race.

Mr. Alexander says that Tolstoy felt and thought and wrote as only Tolstoy could, and not as a Russian. I confess that this statement puzzles me. Did Tolstoy then think as Tolstoy, some international patriot of nowhere, "untainted" by environment or heritage or culture? To suppose some such idealistic and unfettered soul is to go to ridiculous lengths to support a pitifully weak thesis. I readily concede that love, truth and the other emotions and virtues and vices are common to all mankind. But the ex-

pression varies from nation to nation, and expression is the heart of literature. Even so great a pantheist and internationalist as Shelley had to fall back on so very national and English a symbol as the skylark to express the emotion of joy. A magnificent poem, admittedly, but one could be pardoned for believing that an untravelled Chinese, reading a translation in far Cathay, might be unable to appreciate to the full the imagery and the figures of the poem.—SEFTON WALSH (Waipukurau).

## BLACK RECORD

Sir,—I would be glad if I could share your belief that Sir Robert Vansittart has acted wisely in publishing the text of his "butcher bird" broadcasts, but I believe he would have better served our cause had he allowed them to slip as rapidly and as unobtrusively as possible into oblivion. The radio audience, as anyone who has listened to propaganda will appreciate, has a short memory, and one had reason to hope that the harm done by Sir Robert's ill-advised and provocative talks would in time be dissipated. This latest development however, which seems to be dictated more by personal vanity than by high policy, appears certain to perpetuate the crowning blunder of a career which, from the diplomatic point of view, is a black enough record in itself. I may be misjudging the man. His advice may not have been taken by the Governments which he has served, but if that were the case, he would, one feels, have resigned before this. The only conclusion to which one can come to is that the foreign policy of the British Government before and after September, 1939, was, in the main, approved, if not suggested by him. That being so, we are presented with the disquieting deduction that Sir Robert Vansittart was as assiduous in feeding the butcher-bird before September, 1939, as he has been in shouting at it since then.

The pernicious racialism on which the talks were based is, of course, as lunatic as the talks themselves were improper. Over 100 years ago, when Canning was pleading for the recognition of Greek independence, he pointed out that a nation of a million souls could not be regarded as pirates. How much more irrational it is to condemn one of eighty millions, however misled they may be.—AUDAX (Auckland).

## INTERRUPTED RECORDS.

Sir,—I wish to complain about the way New Zealand radio announcers seem to do their work. The YA stations often cut off good records to play the chimes, and waste time between records. I refer mainly to 2YA. I have no complaints about the programmes, they are excellent. And the ZB stations are equally slack. They cut records off in the middle and often don't announce what they are going to play or have played.

But congratulations on the great issues of *The Listener* that you are putting out.

PAID MY LICENCE (Wellington).

## NEW PLYMOUTH PROGRAMMES.

Sir,—May I congratulate the producers of *Hard Cash*? In my opinion it is one of the finest produced serials on the radio network.

But can you tell New Plymouth listeners why 2YB has not one single serial throughout the week? It seems a pity, too, that an Australian station of greater power should be continually making it so difficult to listen to that excellent station for programmes, 2YD Wellington. All the same I congratulate you on your particularly fine radio magazine.—C. H. HAMTON (New Plymouth).

## CORRECTION

In an article, "Russia's Weak Spot," in last week's issue, the amount of granite excavated in the construction of the Maryinsky Canal System was given as 2,500 tons. This was a typographical error, and should have read 2,500,000 tons.