

# LISTENER

Incorporating N.Z. RADIO RECORD

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## Third Year

NOW that we are into our third year of war it is natural to ask how many more years lie ahead and how much has been achieved in the two years just ended. No one climbs a mountain without looking back at intervals to see how far he has advanced, without moments of anxiety and weariness, and without wondering in the most difficult places if his strength will hold to the end. He knows, too, if he has climbed before, that the summit is many times farther away than it appeared to his fore-shortened view. Then the stage arrives at which he is too tired to do anything but struggle desperately on. And we have not yet reached that stage in the present war. We are nowhere near the end of our strength, and it would be foolish to suppose that we have passed the most difficult places.

It is in fact folly, though it is human and natural, to be counting the years at all. The end may be quite near, though there is nothing to indicate that it is, and it may be so far away that we have hardly yet begun. Whatever the facts are, we must not delude ourselves by wishful thinking. If we, who have taken so much more punishment than we have been able to inflict, are only now beginning to feel our strength, it is madness to suppose that Germany, who was so well prepared to begin with, is already beginning to weaken after so short a period of real fighting. We can't afford such madness. Magnificently though Russia is resisting, Germany is still moving forward, and the war would still not be won if the tide turned the other way. The most we can say yet of the Russian campaign is that it has cost Hitler far more than he has gained from it, even if we cut Russia's estimate of his losses in two.

And yet our second year did yield three profoundly important results. It showed, first, that Hitler was not able to win even when everything was in his favour. It brought America definitely to Britain's side. And it proved finally to the whole world that Hitler was not merely a madman, but a treacherous madman, whom civilisation dare not endure a day longer than it would take to overpower and chain him. So perhaps there is a good reason after all for believing that the end is nearer than a comparison of present resources would place it.

## 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.

### OUR FILM REVIEWS.

Sir,—I should like to support "G.M." against the dull moral and etymological puritanism of L. D. Austin and "C'rect Card." To hold that films should not be reviewed because some deal with risqué situations is hard on those puritans who occasionally visit the cinema and who depend on reviews to tell them what is and what is not objectionable by their standards. But those of us who are mentally adult know that "bright farcical entertainment" has depended on risqué situations from Aristophanes to Hollywood, and we are content to enjoy what has amused every generation to date.

I rejoice further in the continued enrichment of English by the powerful American vernacular. English is an anglo-saxon-norman-latin hybrid which is now on its way to becoming a world language. The virility that fits our language for so great a destiny is proved by its continued capacity to produce new offspring. In brief, "G.M." is good—and English can take it!

—H.W. (Wellington).

Sir,—I was interested to read L. D. Austin's views on films and *The Listener's* film page. Would he, I wonder, extend the scope of his puritanism to include condemnation of Mozart's *Così Fan Tutte*, and similar works? If he would not, then on what valid grounds does he make distinctions?

—JUST CURIOUS (Auckland).

### LUXURY IMPORTS.

Sir,—Considering the nation's need of minimising the import of luxuries not essential to the war effort, may I put forward a suggestion whereby the import of gramophone records might be cut down by one half? If the gramophone were constructed so that the turntable would rotate anti-clockwise as well as clockwise all the NBS's jazz records could be used twice—from the edge to the middle and from the middle to the edge.

Owing to the emancipated nature of modern dance music the same effect could be produced in either of these ways, thus doubling the value of every disc. As we all know, no classical music recordings are now being imported by the shops, only popular numbers, so this would cut down imports by a half.—D. D. DISCOBOBBULOS (Christchurch).

### JOKES IN THE BIBLE

Sir,—In your leader on "Punch" and the Pulpit you maintain that there are no jokes in the Bible. On the contrary, the Bible, especially the Prophets, is full of humour, although there is a great difference between the modern British conception of humour and that held by the ancient Hebrews. Hebrew humour is essentially satirical, but is usually taken literally by Western readers. Moreover, the Authorised Version often obscures the real meaning; were its translations more literal, everyone would be able to appreciate the joke perpetrated by Job when he named one of his daughters "Keren-happuch," a word which means "a horn (or box) of cosmetics." Perhaps a sly hint on Job's part that the girl was the image of her mother! Again, there is the Hebrew word "Tsara," which means a "rival wife." It also means "misiery," which is not surprising. May I refer you to Chapter 1, "Humour of the Bible," in Dr. J. Chotzner's "Hebrew Humour," where the whole conception of humour among the Children of Israel is thoroughly analysed. As for your further statement that humour and the religious emotion do not mix—well, it simply is not true of Catholicism; that is a point upon which St. Francis of Assisi and G. K. Chesterton and I would, I am sure, be in complete agreement.—K.S. (New Brighton).

### BY WHOSE LEAVE?

Sir,—Having been an interested, but not consistent listener to the various sessions so ably conducted from 12B's studio by Mr. Kenneth Melvin, I was annoyed to hear him on Monday evening, August 18, in his "March of Time" session, commit a flagrant piece of plagiarism. I must admit that I have never heard him claim in so many words that his material is original, but I fancy that the majority of his listeners entertain that impression and have been allowed to do so. In this particular instance, his period on the air was completely occupied by a reading—without any acknowledgment whatsoever—of an amusing and exceedingly well-informed article in the July issue of the English magazine *Lilliput*—"Faux Pas That Have Forged Man's Fate," by the well-known writer George Edinger.

Now, even if, as is most unlikely, Mr. Edinger has no objection to his work being co-opted in this fashion, *Lilliput* is fully copyrighted, publishing in each issue the following notice: "The entire contents of *Lilliput* are protected by Copyright in Great Britain, the United States and other countries, and must not be reproduced." It would be interesting to know whether Mr. Melvin has some special arrangement with the editors of *Lilliput*, but even if he has, he should at least acknowledge the source of his material. In any case, I should imagine that it would be the duty of the 12B station authorities to guard against such breaches of literary good manners. My impression is that Mr. Melvin quoted a good 99 per cent of the text word for word.—JOAN HARROW (Auckland).

(Mr. Melvin makes his reply: "Your correspondent errs in charging me with using material in this broadcast 'without any acknowledgment whatsoever,' as listeners who heard the broadcast will be able to confirm. The opening words of the script used on this occasion were as follows: 'I am indebted to an overseas journalist for an exceedingly clever summary of some of the famous mistakes of history, an article which merits wider audience, and some of which are now presented.'")

### AN ARGUMENT

Sir,—Please tell me:

(1) Is it a record listeners hear when they hear the chiming of Big Ben just before the evening news-reel, or do we hear the strokes of the clock direct from London? My wife says it is a record. I say it isn't.

(2) And how about those solemn notes of music immediately after the clock strikes. Here again the occupants of this house differ. For the love of the "mike" settle the argument, and help to restore peace and happiness in this hitherto abode of domestic bliss.—"T.J." (Halcombe).

[(1) Your wife wins. (2) From a record.—Ed.]

### LARGEST ORGAN IN THE WORLD

Sir,—Your statement in this week's *Listener* that the organ accompanying the Salt Lake City Tabernacle Choir, with its four manuals and 109 speaking stops, is the largest in the world, impels me to write. If this instrument has only 109 speaking stops, it is easily beaten by the Sydney Town Hall organ, which has five manuals, 130 speaking stops, and is dated 1890. Moreover, the Sydney instrument is "straight," and the tendency of late years, especially in the U.S.A., has been to "borrow" and extend right and left. I understand that several larger instruments have been constructed since 1890, but have not the information by me.—ORGANICUS (Oamaru).

### POINTS FROM LETTERS

"FATHER OF ONE" (Auckland) suggests that the Women's Auxiliary Service Corps should not be disbanded when peace comes, but remain as a Women's Auxiliary Corps to "give aid and comfort to the many harassed and over-worked mothers of small children."

"KHANDALLAH" asks if there is any authority for making Ernest Bevin (in the radio play "Imperial Leader") drop "most of his h's and a good few g's."

"PETER AND THE WOLF" (Hamilton) "supports the plea for an itemised classical hour," and asks that the names of compositions should be repeated at the end of an item as well as announced in advance.

"A CONSTANT LISTENER" (Martinborough) regrets that "Fred and Maggie" have been "put off on Sunday" and is sure that 90 per cent. of other listeners agree with her.