

LISTENER

Incorporating N.Z. RADIO RECORD

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Stalin Writes to the Pope

IT is not certain as we write this that Stalin *did* send a birthday message to the Pope, but a majority of sensible people must hope that he did. The Pope would know why the message was sent. Stalin would know that the Pope would know. There would be no possibility of deception or misunderstanding on one side or the other, and therefore no attempt at dissimulation. If a message was sent it meant this, and no more than this, in whatever language it was actually expressed: "We have a common enemy. Let us co-operate against him."

In the presence of Hitlerism, Christianity and commonsense mean the same thing. In other words it is as Christian as it is sensible to give and to accept help in resisting thugs and savages. Unless they can be beaten off our religious as well as our political systems will be swept away; the convictions on which they rest will be denied expression; and since faith without works is dead, lack of expression will bring moral even if it does not bring mental death. We shall either cease to care, becoming scientific robots or monkeys, or we shall care so much that no country for two or three generations will again know peace. This the Pope and Stalin see with the same realistic clarity; and since each leads a vast host of faithful followers, neither can afford to sacrifice them to the fears of the fantastically consistent.

Nor does companionship part of the way commit either to the same route all the way. To suppose that it does is as foolish as to suppose that a white man rescued from drowning by a black man must go to the black man's home and adopt his way of life; or that two soldiers who serve throughout a war in the same platoon must afterwards support the same political party. They need not, and as often as not they will not. But they are likely, if they go each his own way, to go without the heat that might otherwise have embittered their political relations.

LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

NOTICE TO SUBSCRIBERS

If this week's copy of "The Listener" arrives late, blame Japan. We print in Auckland and Auckland staged an air-raid dispersal as we were going to press this week.

PRIDE OR PREJUDICE?

Sir,—Many compliments have been rightly bestowed on your film critic G.M. I take a professional interest in his reviews and find them with a few exceptions excellent, even if I do not always agree with his judgment. May I however air a grievance?

G.M. has been annoying me several times by "showing off"—out of sheer affectation—his "illiteracy". Off hand I can only remember the cases of *Pride and Prejudice* and *The Bluebird* (there were others and I am not speaking of works of indifferent literary value), when G.M. was proudly boasting of his ignorance of the "originals".

In this week's *Listener* (March 1) he says, talking of Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, "it is so long since I read it that my memory is open to correction." Well, who prevents G.M. correcting his memory by reading the story again? It is neither long nor difficult to obtain (and the same was true for *Pride and Prejudice* and *The Bluebird*). After all being a critic involves some responsibilities and, if necessary also some tedious (?) work, to provide the "background" to a witty chat.

IMAGO (Hastings).

G.M. replies: "Neither pride nor prejudice but the easy way out. It took me, for instance, two hours to see *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, and, believe it or not, four more to write about it. All spare-time work, too. 'Imago' may safely delete that question-mark after 'tedious.' But if *The Listener* cares to employ me as a full-time film critic I'll cheerfully undertake to read or re-read all the classics,

Facts and Figures

(By WHIM-WHAM)

[Fifty tons of paper a week from a city of 200,000 people would make 5,000 anti-aircraft shell containers, or 21,000 three-inch mortar bomb carriers. Fifty tons of metal provides two cruiser tanks. . . . More than six hundred-weight of bones a week would produce, etc., etc. . . .—British Official Wireless message.]

It used to comfort me to hear

Our Fuglemen of Industry

Making it beautifully clear

That by the Middle of next Year

We should have Tons and Tons and Tons

Of Battleships and Bombs and Guns,

And Ranks and Ranks and Ranks and Ranks

Of Armoured Motor-cars and Tanks—

Enough, in fact, to turn the Trick,

And break the Axis like a Stick!

Oh, doubtless Much of it was true,

But now it's very plain to see

That Pounds and Pounds and Pounds and

Pounds

In Budgets aren't sufficient Grounds

For Confidence of Victory!

It's worse than Wishful Thinking, too,

To think that Rows and Rows and Rows

Of Noughts can bring to Naught our Foes—

This totting up of Treats in Store

Is not what's meant by Total War!

No Doubt such Figures have their Use

In public Speeches, where they tell

Of new Proposals to produce,

I mean, to make Production swell;

But oh, my Boredom makes me bold

To say that Billions leave me cold!

I do not wish to carp, or scoff,

But wouldn't we be better off

With Less and Less and Less and Less

Sky-high-financial Fulsomeness,

And More and More and More and More

Of what it takes to win the War?

and all the other stories, plays, biographies, and newspaper articles from which Hollywood may conceivably at some time make pictures. Better still, I might be able to afford to take somebody like 'Imago' to the pictures with me to give me first-hand information about the originals."

A DISTINGUISHED CONDUCTOR.

Sir,—Your listener "N.A." of Hutt Valley appears to resent Mr. Tyrer being referred to as a distinguished conductor. I suggest in the first place that the National Broadcasting Service has never before had the services of a conductor of the calibre of Mr. Tyrer—except for very occasional concerts when we had broadcasts of orchestras conducted by Sir Thomas Beecham when he has visited the Dominion. Secondly, there is no humiliation involved in regard to other conductors. These men, although doing good work, and giving us good orchestral concerts, cannot be termed distinguished—and I am sure that they would be the first to agree that Mr. Tyrer is a truly distinguished conductor.

I have a suggestion which I was hoping might have been made before this. Briefly it is this. One has been hearing very excellent orchestral concerts from 2YA conducted by Mr. Tyrer. If these were made public concerts as well as broadcast concerts, people who enjoy listening to good orchestral music would have no objection to paying for admission. Incidentally it would be extra pocket money for the National Broadcasting Service. I feel sure such concerts would be well patronised.

M.L.B. (Hamilton).

THANKS FOR CLASSICS

Sir,—I wonder if you would permit two Auckland University students to convey their appreciation of the excellent classical programmes offered by the Wellington stations. Last year we had formed about us a small musical circle to which each member contributed several major works. Only the very best was played, and the range was wide. Our greatest regret in being posted to Wellington was in leaving this for the reputed barrenness of broadcast programmes. But now, after a month in this city, we find ourselves amid a richness of first-class music unknown in Auckland. We have had two major works each night of the week, with the possible exception of Mondays, and the interlacing of the programmes from 2YA, 3YA and 2YC, the stations which interest us most, has been very well managed. There is, however, one request we should like to make. None who enjoy 2YC's programmes can fail to appreciate the world's greatest orchestral masterpiece—the "Choral" symphony, Beethoven's ninth. We should like very much to hear this work performed over the air, and suggest that its length need be considered no disadvantage if compared with the length of the operatic works often heard.

TWO STUDENTS (Weir House, Wellington).

NON-VIOLENCE AND ALL THAT.

Sir,—When your correspondent H. H. Fountain asserts that the secular historian is unable to explain the miraculous spread of Christianity in the Roman world, he deludes himself by supposing that the secular historian's definition of Christianity is as elastic and accommodating as his own. No one familiar with the *ethos* of the primitive Christian community would wittingly identify it with the brand of State religion fathered by Constantine. True, a doctrine labelled Christianity did spread rapidly through Rome's dominions, but it had no more effect upon the life of the people as a whole than, say, the Anglican communion has to-day. Under its aegis mankind became, if anything, more violent than ever.

SURREALIST (Auckland).

POINTS FROM LETTERS

R. McClure (Wellington) writes to congratulate us on a "much-needed new lay-out," adding that it is now possible to "consult a day's programmes without turning over the pages."

"Zorina" (Te Puke) would like "more music from the ballet"—especially Tchaikovsky and Schumann.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

JILL.—Mr. Drummond.

E. P. DAWSON (Wellington).—Crafty is as crafty does—in letters as in life.