

Sex Problems

IT is inevitable that war should cause some disturbance of our social standards and natural that we should be worried about it. The Wanganui Education Board is worried, and that is good. The very frank report presented last week by its senior inspector, and passed on for action to other Boards, was not a word stronger than such a situation demands. It was in fact not strong enough if its foundation of facts was sound. But it is very difficult to verify such facts. It is possible to say that the sale of certain articles is increasing or decreasing, that the number of people undergoing treatment in hospitals and clinics has since a certain date risen or fallen, but no-one, on the evidence of such facts alone, can pretend to know the situation as a whole. Besides, there is a sharp conflict between the facts submitted by the Wanganui inspector and those offered by navy, army, and air force doctors. While he says, and perhaps says truly, that "venereal disease is spreading like a plague among our people", reports from the fighting forces suggest that there is relatively little venereal disease in camps and on ships and that there has never been much since the war started. Both statements may be true: venereal disease may be under control among soldiers and out of control among the civilian population; but if that is the case it is unusual. Most people, while feeling glad that the Education authorities are moving, will feel at the same time that it is easier to make alarming statements than to prove them. In the meantime there are some things that we all do know. One is that promiscuity is a social, moral, and physical abomination. Another is that sex instruction in school will not stop the sale and use of contraceptives, and may increase it. A third is that talking about venereal disease to children is about as sensible as taking them into a slaughter house to turn them against war. A fourth is that no parent and no teacher need hesitate to give children true, simple, and satisfying answers to their questions as they arise. A fifth is that the worst way of imparting sex instruction is to hand it over to the morbid and kinked people of both sexes who emerge, like worms after rain, as often as there is an alarm about sexual aberrations among young people. Finally we must never forget in dealing with children that it is often wise to be blind and deaf.

LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

FIGHTS AND FUN

Sir,—Editors must have their fun, and it is not always possible for them to check the sources of their information. May I express agreement with much of the editorial entitled "No Fight No Fun"? At the same time may I indicate the general drift of the remarks upon which it was supposed to be based?

In my address to the New Education Fellowship, I was interested in developing the theme that New Zealand, surrounded as it is by countries strenuously engaged in stimulating the growth of a national spirit, might find that it was transferring its cultural allegiance from England to America. I suggested that this would not be desirable, that we should show our acquaintance with the best that is known and thought, adapt it to our own conditions and add our own small contribution, that we should develop our interest and pride in New Zealand traditions and history, that we should find ourselves and our neighbours in the Pacific.

I regret that with all your experience of newspaper reports you were unable to give me credit for a little good taste and a little common sense.—H. WINSTON RHODES (Christchurch).

(Our comment was based, not on the abbreviated Press Association report, but on the much fuller report of Christchurch Press. We did not notice any correction of this report by Mr. Rhodes, though we watched the Press for some days.—Ed.J.

HITLERISM OR THE GERMAN PEOPLE?

Sir,—After reading the letter by E. A. W. Smith in *The Listener*, I have no doubt that his ideas would receive the blessing of Dr. Goebbels and Fascist propagandists throughout the world. It would certainly be a pleasant surprise for Hitler to find that Professor Foerster and Mr. Smith believe him to be "from the democratic standpoint the most legitimate ruler Germany has ever had, a Kaiser who owes his crown to the most genuine popular vote." History, however, does not agree. The burning of the Reichstag and the consequent refusal to count Communist and Socialist votes, at a time when election returns showed the influence of the Nazi Party to be on the wane, give the lie to "the greatest living German." I should also like to point out that the Anglo-Soviet Pact is particularly worded as an alliance for "the defeat of Hitlerism," and that the Soviet Union has repeatedly stressed the importance of this wording.

Professor Foerster's ideas of inherent German militarism are on a par with Hitler's "pure Nordic race," and are entirely without scientific evidence. They are similar to the "experts' views that "the Russians could never make fighters," and like those cannot serve any useful purpose to the United Nations in the struggle against Fascism.

H. E. DAY (Papatoetoe).

Sir,—So E. A. W. Smith (Christchurch), that disciple of Lord Vansittart, has popped up again with his pernicious argument that all Germans are bad Germans and that there is no opposition

between Hitlerism and the German people. He has quoted Professor F. W. Foerster: May I be permitted to quote J. B. Priestley, who in a recent BBC talk said, "A good many accounts of life in wartime Germany . . . have suggested that the German people are fairly solidly behind the Nazis, and that there is little evidence of any widespread opposition to the rule of Hitler and his gang. These statements have been used to prove that the people who denounce all Germans as dangerous barbarians have been right all the time. They have provided fuel for the 'Hate All Germans' machinery. They have encouraged people in the belief that we are fighting not only Hitler and the vast Nazi machine of aggression but the whole German people. For my part, I have always distrusted and disliked this point of view. To begin with, I don't think it helps the war effort, but tends to hinder it. It tries to turn this war into a purely nationalistic war, which it isn't. It gives considerable assistance to Goebbels in his attempts to line up all his people behind Hitler. It is the worst possible kind of propaganda . . . Moreover—and this is still important—it simply isn't true. The facts contradict it at every turn . . ."

Priestley then goes on to describe an exhibition recently held in London to show how different classes of Germans are fighting Nazism within Germany. The evidence which he quotes of highly-organised and widespread opposition is truly remarkable. What a pity Mr. Smith wasn't in London at the time

AUDAX II. (Wellington).

ARE COMMUNISTS ATHEISTS?

Sir,—"Enquirer" asks whether it is not a fact that all members of the Communist Party are atheists. Here is Stalin's reply to a similar question: "Speaking formally, we have no conditions of Party membership which demand that a candidate for Party membership shall be an atheist. The conditions of membership in our Party are: acceptance of the programme and rules of the Party; absolute subordination to the decisions of the Party and its organs; payment of membership dues; and membership in one of the Party locals."

Lenin admitted the possibility of accepting the entry into the Party not only of "all workers who still retain faith in God," but even of priests on the one obvious condition that "they come to co-operate with us in our work, conscientiously perform Party work, and do not oppose the Party programme."

J.W. (Wellington).

POINTS FROM LETTERS

W. C. TAYLOR, 16 Rhodes St., Waimate, would like to hear from any reader of *The Listener* who can confirm the fact that the name of his son, A. L. Taylor, was included in a list of prisoners' names broadcast from Japan.

K. F. PATEL (Keri Keri), denies that Dr. B. R. Ambedkar is the President of the Indian Labour Party or entitled to speak for Labour organisation in India. After Mr. Gandhi, he says, the true representative of India's (Labour) millions is Mr. A. Thakker, of the "Servants of India" Society.

ANSWER TO CORRESPONDENT

C.B. (Pukekohe): Dangerous to wake that not-very-soundly sleeping dog.



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