

THIS NEW ZEALAND

Sir,—As one who considers Oliver Duff's *New Zealand Now* the most original thing of its kind, and has drawn upon it repeatedly for his own writing, I am delighted to see it has been reprinted. David Hall's admirable review raises certain points which, I suggest, are important not only in judging the book, but in studying our national development and its literary interpretation.

The comments of the reviewer that "the sort of life that is led around the shores of the Hauraki Gulf and parts northwards" is very largely ignored, and that there is little mention of the Maori, led me to re-read the book. I would say it is an Otago man's book, and so invites some consideration of what may have been formative influences. Oliver Duff was brought up in Central Otago, and graduated in Dunedin fifty years ago. The gulf between Otago and North Auckland (and indeed, Auckland city) was much wider then than now. I have written, and I hope not with great exaggeration, that the South was as ignorant of the other end of the country as London was of the Highlands at the end of the 18th century. Consider the nature of the quickest travel then. Train from Central to Dunedin and then to Lyttelton; ship to Wellington; train to New Plymouth; ship to Onehunga; train to Auckland; ship to some northern port; transfer to coach on bad roads or some isolated railway.

Of course, it worked the other way, too. We Aucklanders were not easily drawn to travel in such conditions. Unlike the South in respect to North Auckland, however, we did not regard the other end as frontier country. I, who am of an age with Oliver Duff, went to work in Christchurch when I was twenty-three, but I was in my fifties when I first saw Dunedin adequately, and had my first sight of Central and the Mt. Cook region. Early associations are very potent. That Oliver Duff has so little to say about the Maori may be partly due to the fact that the Maori is not a companion or a problem in Central, or anywhere else in the South Island.

The reference to the Hauraki Gulf and northwards may be linked to Oliver Duff's view that the sea has never penetrated our minds, and we have not become sailors. This I consider a serious error. I feel sure we are a sea people. We use the sea for business and pleasure and it is in our blood. If you want to know what is thought of our quality as seamen, ask the Admiralty. The handiness and initiative of the young New Zealander abroad comes partly from knocking about in boats, from canoes to yachts and launches. But this sea sense increases as you go north, or at any rate, becomes more intimate. Above a line drawn from Kawhia to the Bay of Plenty, lies a territory with its own combination of sea characteristics: tidal rivers and creeks; channels winding through sandbanks; mangroves; a plenitude of bays and harbours; some deeply indented; pohutukawas, friendliest of trees; sheltering islands; all in a climate that becomes warmer as one travels north. There the call of the sea is more seductive than anywhere else.

The contrast between this amphibious life in a soft scene, and the Colorado-like landscape of Central, is sharp indeed. I believe I appreciate what the sight and scent of tussock, and the

LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

Alpine vista, mean to a Southerner, but as a result of early memories, "New Zealand" means to me, primarily, a northern tidal river and a pohutukawa. Such is the variety of this fascinating land of ours, which must in some measure produce variety among our people.

ALAN MULGAN
(Wellington).

THE HYDROGEN BOMB

Sir,—Mr. Southon still fails completely to state what specific thing it is that the Communists have and we need to ensure peace. Instead, he gives us a dissertation based on the relation of arms, conventional and other, to the world situation. He says: "If we trust in armaments well knowing that we cannot actually use them, then we are relying for our sense of security on what we know to be an illusion." Who trusts arms well knowing that they cannot be used? Is it the Russians, or us? Have the Russians made a declaration that since mankind dare not now begin a war, even with conventional weapons, they have resolved to destroy all kinds of arms, abolish all kinds of armament manufacture and disband all kinds of armed forces; that they invite the rest of the world to do the same, and that in proof of their good faith, they throw open all their territories, including satellites, to the closest international inspection? As the biggest military menace in the world today, it is up to Russia to give that lead.

Mr. Southon says that if we are to survive, East-West tension must be eliminated and differences reconciled. Have the Russians tried to eliminate tension and reconcile differences? Or have they, through the years, persistently increased tension by making unwarranted charges against the West and organising world-wide conspiracies of unrest?

The bland simplicity of Mr. Southon's proposed solution is truly delicious. All we have to do is: "seek out and develop the internal contradictions in both sets of ideas until we do arrive at something that will give acceptable firm support to both sides equally." But if, having found this mysterious and at present unknown "something" you end up by giving both sides equal support—what difference have you made? The four officers of the Soviet Academy of Sciences who were expelled from the Party and deprived of all their functions for making a suggestion for tackling the "internal contradictions" of a state that prates of democracy and freedom but operates as a ruthless despotism, now know a good deal more about this than Mr. Southon.

J. MALTON MURRAY (Oamaru).

REPORT ON SOUTH AFRICA

Sir,—I listened with great interest to the excellent BBC broadcast of various South Africans' views on "apartheid." I feel, however, that one of the most essential issues involved was completely missed. (Unless it was referred to in the first talk which I did not hear.) I refer to the question of Native labour—to my mind the major stumbling block of "apartheid."

If complete territorial segregation of all races is intended, then what is to become of the vast labour force upon which South African industry, mining, farming and domestic service, etc., now

depends? I can assure you, very few apartheid supporters would agree to a system whereby the European relinquished his monopoly of skilled labour and undertook what was previously "kaffirs' work." If, on the other hand, this labour force is maintained, with only "surplus" labour filtered out, then there would be no real difference from the present state of affairs. Furthermore, real industrial development in Native areas would compete with the labour supply available for white areas. Also, just how are the millions who work for the Europeans to "develop along their own lines" at the same time?

Clearly what the Nationalists really want is the Native's labour without the Native, and this they would like to obtain by creating large "reservoirs" of labour whose population would be impoverished enough to want to come out and work for the European—under a closely-controlled system (as is now done in the gold mines).

The Nationalist Government will remain in power whilst there is no vocal and effective opposition to the idea of white supremacy. Strauss's United Party is only opposed to the Government in degree and method, not in principle—and that is not enough under the prevailing conditions in South Africa.

G. ROYLE (Wellington).

NZBS PLAYS

Sir,—I do not want to criticise unduly, but after weeks of Monday and Friday night plays from 2YA I am provoked to protest. Is there no regard at all to casting the right voice to the personality portrayed? I cannot see how there can be when we are forced to listen to William Austin and Davina Whitehouse in practically three plays out of four. I cannot believe there is such a shortage of actors in Wellington, that it is necessary to use the same actors continually. I am not criticising their acting ability, only their voices. Too much of anything is monotonous. Some of the Christchurch plays have been excellent, perhaps because we hear them only occasionally. I enjoyed the play *Mildred Dear* and the BBC serial *The Mill on the Floss*, and others well cast. The new serial *Dead Circuit* also promises to be good, not so much because of the story alone, but because the voices match the parts portrayed perfectly. I can see no reason why the NZBS could not do as well.

M.M. (Upper Hutt).

(One small reason, of course, is the difference between two million and fifty million people.—Ed.)

Sir,—We seem to be having a preponderance of radio plays just now—all to the good if the comedy or drama is worth listening to. *Leisure for Living*, from a novel by Nelle Scanlan, was advertised on June 9. "This should be good," I thought, as I hopefully turned to 2YA. We endured the rasping angry tones of Uncle Mortimer's voice for a while with the conviction that he would soon be speaking naturally, but instead this irritated, bombastic manner of speech was accentuated, and reluctantly we turned back to 2YC.

Now there was nothing in the beginning of this play to warrant such a tone. A true actor might now and then

raise his voice to clinch his argument, but certainly would not continue in the same tone when the theme did not require it. So many of the NZBS productions are marred by harsh, exaggerated voice tones.

NATURAL VOICE (Wellington).

THE GOON SHOW

Sir,—As fans of the BBC *Goon Show* we would like to add our voices to the clamour that the Goons be continued to be broadcast. We would also like to request that it be re-broadcast on a week night other than Saturday, when most of us are out at dances, parties, etc. Or better still, a repeat on our favourite radio station 2YD during the week.

THREE GOONS OF JOHNSONVILLE.

Sir,—When, oh, when, are we bereft goons to hear our programme again? Many long and goonless weeks have passed since it went off the air, and we sadly miss our friends Min and Henry and Eccles. No more are our Saturday evenings enlivened by their special brand of amazing humour, and we must seek sad solace in programmes of lesser talent. Having given us a taste, is it fair to stifle the development of "goonionism" in this country? We hope our plea will fall on sympathetic ears.

A GOON WITH A VIEW (Auckland).

Sir,—May I be permitted to enter a heartfelt plea for the rapid return of the highly esteemed *Goon Show*, the funniest programme to hit this country since the days of *Much Binding in the Marsh*, which is now, alas, only heard through streams of static and startling noises from Nelson. We are told in *The Listener* for March 9 that the Goons started in 1951. Even allowing for the three-year rule enforced by the BBC, there are still three years of Goonery forthcoming before they become *A Show Called Fred* for commercial television.

Is the NZBS going to reinstate the Goons or are all true living (and dead) Goons going to be forced to buy wireless sets powerful enough to pick the Goons up from Australia, whence they are broadcast every Sunday? The day of *Take It From Here* is done—it should be buried mercifully in the Sunday afternoon programmes, to make way for the New Deal in radio—the Goons. Let, then, every true Goon-lover arise to the cry—Liberty, Equality, Goonery—rally round the polka-dotted flag of sky-blue pink and pig-sty purple (the Multi-colours) and advance and storm the Bastille of *The Listener* office in their latest triumph for world Goonism.

LONG GOON SILVER (Auckland).

(A new series of *The Goon Show* will begin on December 1 from all YA stations, 1YZ, 3YZ and 4YZ. Station 2YZ begins the series on November 30. Meanwhile, the old series can be heard from 12B, 22B, 32B and 42B, beginning on August 26, at 7.0 p.m. It will begin at 1XH and 22A on September 9.—Ed.)

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

Massenet (Dunedin): Your answer was in the issue of July 13.

Ada H. Fache (Dunedin): "The New Zealand Way" talks are to be repeated in the summer.

N.M.J. (Gisborne): Sorry, not practicable. Student (Dunedin): No other broadcasts of the talk have been scheduled.

J.B.M.W. (Wellington): Letters should be related to broadcasting or to topics raised in *The Listener*.