

ENEMY OF FREEDOM

Sir,—As a newcomer to the *New Zealand Listener*, it may be unfortunate that the first copy to come into my hands is that of January 11, in which, in your editorial, "The Enemy of Freedom," and in the eulogy of Reuben Ship's *The Investigator*, one can see how well the real enemies of freedom—Communists and fellow travellers—have done their work of smearing those who tried to expose Communist activities. It is a strange commentary on our times that we are urged to fear, not these self-confessed enemies of freedom, but the men who would try to defend freedom against its sworn enemies.

Ever since the 1920's the activities of Communists and their fellow travellers have continued unchecked—except in isolated cases and with the help of the maligned investigators. These activities, which are still being pursued, include, at the underground level, espionage and infiltration. The latter is the most important and the hardest to counter since it involves the highest in the land and the opinion-forming machinery of the press, radio, etc. It was these difficulties that hampered and finally stifled the House Committee on Un-American Activities which had to do its job in a climate which those Communists concealed in the press and elsewhere made sure would be one of suspicion and jitters.

Present-day society suffers the cancer of Communism largely because it has substituted Almighty Man for Almighty God, and has lost the power of distinguishing right from wrong. But good and evil do not cease to exist simply because we no longer recognise them. Communism is evil, but it is a unique evil which cannot be compared, as your articles seem to suggest, to anything else in history so that it must be fought with weapons which in any other circumstances might be repugnant but which are justified in this singular crisis provided they are not themselves evil. Nothing could be more hopeless than to suppose that Communism can be defeated by run-to-seed liberalism, for that is its optimum environment. If we are not prepared to grasp the danger of this evil and make the sacrifices involved in fighting it, we must accept the conclusion that our civilisation is not fit to survive.

N. E. DOWNEY (Lower Hutt).

DYLAN THOMAS AND SWINBURNE

Sir,—The few concessions he makes to Dylan Thomas and "Swinlan's" own assertions make it clear to me that his ground moves under him. "Rich vocabulary and melody" do not come from nothing, but are the product of an unusual way of seeing the cosmos that couples new words to breed new myths; and these more adequate than the prevailing one of puritanism. Though I grant that Thomas was passionate, melancholic, and obsessed with the carnal, I cannot grant (a) that the things with which he was preoccupied; life, death, wombs and graves are commonplaces; or (b) that Thomas saw them as such in his poems. On the contrary, everywhere that he speaks to me I see the light of the denied vision which, looking down through the body, finally saw it in terms of the great things out of which it had been made. While admitting that only a small proportion of the verse is entirely lucid, it is also true for me that later readings often send a shaft of joy where before there had been darkness.

Finally, be they Elysian groves or Christian heavens in which it is sup-

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posed the poet now walks, is it not instructive to consider how much all our conceptions of heaven lean upon the despised earth? The deeper the earth is probed and the more consistently faced, the fuller and more satisfying becomes our imagined heaven. The poet in Thomas was concerned thus to consider it.

JOHN SUMMERS (Christchurch).

GOOD TASTE

Sir,—It surprises me that the letter of your Christchurch correspondent on "Good Taste" has not drawn further comment. As a universal, good taste is indeed a kind of harmony, although I cannot see how harmony can be carried to excess, nor in what way it is connected with uniformity. Good taste in clothes is rather a specialised and not a very vital form of taste, but even so it is quite separate from fashion, which merely describes the limits within which good or bad taste can be shown.

The mind is powerfully conditioned by the sound and appearance of things. The army uses its brass and drums, the church its organ and choir, to achieve a particular response, and it is from responses such as these that we have the beginnings of a popular taste. An example of popular taste which is also bad taste is that engendered by the commercial advertiser who uses sensuality to break down customer resistance. In such cases, justification on the plea of popular demand or taste is groundless: the skilfully designed lure is swallowed without taste at all, creating only a pimple of desire ripe for further irritation.

Unfortunately, the exponents of good taste too often cheapen their wares with a type of academic conceit known as snobbery. This results from their fascination by the order of things and it leads to a revulsion of feeling in others.

Between this pair of opposites lies the genuine aesthetic palate, an inherent gift developed by experience; we may use it to recognise things which do not merely lie sweet upon the tongue, but which build and satisfy the inner man.

NORMAN WALWYN (Te Kuiti).

A BREAK-UP CEREMONY

Sir,—By chance I listened to the broadcast of the break-up ceremony of the Correspondence School, and found it simple and moving. The ceremony had obviously been planned as a complete programme, in which every part had significance in the whole. The Chairman's introduction and the Headmaster's report were characterised by modesty and sincerity, Professor MacCaskill's address was most stirring, with its ringing message of the need for harmony between man and man and man and land, and the Rt. Hon. Walter Nash struck what seemed to me a fitting note as a conclusion. The carols that were sung (recordings, I suppose) were appropriate,

"Hark, the Herald Angels Sing," crowning the moving address with a note of hope and joy.

Perhaps the most striking feature of the ceremony was that it was free of the humbug and platitudes that have marred most of the school break-ups I have attended.

W. K. McILROY (Feilding).

TIME ON THEIR HANDS

Sir,—At first sight it would seem that a very raw deal is being handed to some people. On the one hand we have the Teddy Boys and Bodgies and Wiggins of Christchurch with time on their hands and no more intelligent way of using it than to haunt the streets and milk bars. On the other hand, there is the highly intelligent group of student observers from Canterbury College, graciously pleased to take time off from their usual highly intellectual activities to make a (presumably) valuable social study of the first group. It does seem to me, though, that nothing very new emerged, nor does it appear that the young people were detected in any conduct approaching the ridiculous organised hooliganism of the annual students' procession.

I hope that the students do not entertain any foolish notion that they belong to any privileged group, or think that they can report on any other social group in a detached way as suffering from ills from which they are themselves immune. No one living today is immune from the terrible and grievous sickness of our times. The students' report may be likened to a report made by a patient on fellow patients in the same hospital ward—all, including the reporter, due to die of the same mysterious pestilence.

There are, perhaps, other groups to whom the students could turn. But they had better be quick, for one feels that the military morons who control the hydrogen bomb are going to have their way with it any time now.

NOT AMUSED (Christchurch).

BROADCAST OPINION

Sir,—How refreshing to hear sincere opinion spoken forthrightly! Might it be true that we are moving from the days when Oliver Duff described our Broadcasting Service as the most cautious in the world? Dr. Robb's exposé of the myth that changing a nurse's uniform turns her into a social worker—when, in fact, her long and careful training teaches her to deal with people in an entirely dependent position with the techniques of benevolent autocracy—gave me new heart.

Now comes Mr. Burton with a clear and dogmatic contradiction of the expensive emotional confusion propagated by Dr. Mazengarb and his Committee. If freedom of speech has truly penetrated to the NZBS, there is hope for us yet.

R.E. (Dunedin).

MEN'S HAIR

Sir,—I cannot agree with Mr. L. D. Austin's assertion that going without a hat is an act of carelessness. Had nature intended that our "thatch" be protected, surely we would have been provided with some form of built-in protection. Some of the baldest men I know are confirmed hat wearers.

Do women wear hats to protect their heads? I doubt it. Do they wear bathing caps to protect the hair or the hair-do? In six months spent in Fiji I cannot recall seeing a bald Fijian nor one who wore a bathing cap.

So far as I know nobody has yet marketed a hair lotion containing onion juice. There seems to be an opening there for enterprise.

C. E. THATCHER (Whakatane).

Sir,—Mr. L. D. Austin wonders why Dr. Turbott did not warn the hatless that they were in danger of losing their hair. At a guess I would say it was because Dr. Turbott attached no importance to such a fear. Has Mr. Austin any convincing evidence to back up his theory? I gave up wearing a hat in my early forties, and now, about forty years later, still retain what I am sure Mr. Austin would concede to be "a good hirsute thatch." A.H.R. (Dunedin).

THE INTERVENTION

Sir,—What has shocked the world is that the British Government was willing to kill Egyptians in order to get its own way, and this after years of condemning other countries for "aggression"! Surely the essence of aggression lies in this willingness to start killing the people of another country and to go on killing them until they give in. Of course, the guilty Government has offered various excuses for its action, but it has shifted its ground so often that none of them is tenable. If any good comes out of this shocking affair it will be that the Eastern peoples will feel that this time the United Nations has intervened to stop an attack by a Western great Power against a small Eastern Power. Nothing will do more for peace than the existence of an impartial authority opposed to aggression, no matter by what nation it is committed.

E. SATCHELL (Auckland).

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

Sir,—Under the above title, "Reader" (Pleasant Point) quotes Hosea 5: 8, as reading "Blow the cornet in Gibeon, and the trumpet in Ramah." My translation of the Old Testament—according to the Masoretic text—gives this version of the words of Hosea: "Blow the horn in Gibeon, and the trumpet in Ramah"—which, I think, puts a different complexion on the whole matter.

MARGUERITE J. WOOLF (Wellington).

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

Theme Tune (Matamata): The music for "Knave of Hearts" is "Skippy," by Bruce Campbell, played by the Melody Light Orchestra conducted by Ole Jensen. Information about the others not available.

Hymn Lover (Patea): You heard the first, successful experiment of the kind; it is hoped to repeat the experiment—and the success—in 1957.

J. M. Greenfield (Wellington): Will try to obtain photograph.

A.G.H. (Grey Lynn): Thank you. Will pass it on.

Listener (Wellington): Your suggestion were passed on.

G. Coombes (Patea): It is physically impossible for a commentator to keep "right up with the ball." The expert you name would tell you so. The check with a portable that you applied to the local man would show it, applied to any expert.

FAITH AND WORKS

A NEW monthly magazine programme called "Faith and Works" will start on the Main National programme at 1.45 p.m. on Sunday, February 3. The magazine will be about activities in churches throughout New Zealand and will be directed principally towards active church members. It can be heard on the first Sunday of each month and will last fifteen minutes. Programmes will include short talks by visiting clerics, some actuality material such as short excerpts from unusual sermons heard during the month, descriptions of unusual churches such as the new Chinese building in Wellington or the new Greek Orthodox church in Auckland, and items on special social work or social services. It will be as topical as possible and will include many of the current happenings among churches. Some issues of the magazine will include a short review of an outstanding religious book. The magazine is to be compiled by Peter Cape, Religious Broadcasts Officer.