

UNPERFORMED OVERTURE

Sir,—Mr. Page's letter seems to be part of a newspaper controversy which began during my absence in Australia. I do not wish to comment on Mr. Page's very proper concern for the larger issues of musical policy, nor do I wish to prolong this correspondence, but there is one point which has been overlooked. It is that Mr. Carr is not the first composer who has had a work rejected by a conductor or a publisher or a musical organisation, and, while music is a living art, he will not be the last. In this he is in good company. He is, however, entitled to the consideration that it should not receive Dominion-wide newspaper publicity. The issue of the original statement to the Press Association in Auckland was, in my opinion, irresponsible and a grievous injustice to Mr. Carr.

MICHAEL BOWLES (Wellington).

EARTH HOUSES

Sir,—What a feast of wholesome urbanity Mr. Vernon Brown has provided for us so far in the series, "Houses, or Where Do You Hang Your Hat?" True, the title of the series is itself like a hat tossed on to the wrong peg—but what matter? Mr. Brown's wit alone would be sufficient justification for the talks, and the sight of him well mounted on his various hobby-horses, and cantering along in his own inimitable style is as rewarding as a good day at the races.

For those of us who are still wondering where we WILL hang our hats nothing concrete has yet materialised. We must thank Mr. Brown for having made explicit the term "philistine." ("One who is unwilling to extend his own experience," or words to that effect.) Surely a succinct definition of Mr. Brown's own attitude to the use of earth as a building material. To say that houses can be built of earth, as though, like the one made from flattened oil-drums, they would be mere isolated curiosities, is to sidestep an undeniable fact. Livable, functional earth houses have been, and are being built all over the world.

The period has arrived when New Zealand architects should think about extending their range of materials to include earth (adobe and pisé types). Enterprising contractors using pneumatic rammers, bulldozers, and modern methods for puddling, could greatly improve on the present rate of erection of our hat-rack enclosures. Reliable reports suggest that such a movement is flowering in New Holland. Why not here?

O. E. MIDDLETON (Auckland).

THE GERMAN OUTLOOK

Sir—I have no doubt that listeners to "Some Impressions of the German Liberal Middle Class" from Station 1YC will have been impressed by the sincerity of the speaker, Mrs. Phoebe Meikle. It is to be hoped, however, that they will also have taken to heart her warnings about herself: she has spent only a few months in Germany, and knowing no German, has never read a newspaper in that language or conversed with a German in his own tongue. Is such a person entitled to give radio broadcasts concerning the German outlook at the present time, a most grave subject to say the least?

Mrs. Meikle has with the best intentions succeeded in giving a most distorted picture of her subject. That not so much as a whisper of the strong and

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vocal hostility felt by the Germans for their French occupiers reached Mrs. Meikle will astound anyone familiar with the German outlook in the French Zone and elsewhere. On the other hand, I can assure listeners who have been disturbed by the sombre general picture drawn by the speaker that it would not be difficult for me to quote experiences (carefully selected) to paint as rosy a picture of the country as Mrs. Meikle's has been dismal.

The truth is, of course, between the two extremes. Present-day Germany, like France, is a strange mixture of vigour and despair, of hope and nihilism. I write this letter to voice the distress felt not only by myself, but by other friends and colleagues who, having had some real contact with Western Germans in recent times, regard "Some Impressions of the German Liberal Middle Class" as a lop-sided and even harmful presentation of certain contemporary German conditions.

J. A. ASHER (Auckland).

THE FAMILY AND SOCIETY

Sir,—Can you tell us who instigated the banning of Mr. Alan Nixon's concluding talks on "The Family and Society" from 1YC? Has some ignorant and obscurantist person or group been given the power to dictate to serious listeners what they shall hear? Have such stupid folk the right to prevent our learned scholars from informing the public on important questions of the day?

The undersigned are among those parents who listened with great interest to Mr. Nixon. All such listeners welcome the assistance of our informed sociologists in their efforts to maintain the integrity of the family. Far from banning his talks, the NZBS should see to it that they are repeated in full on all the main stations for sober digestion by all parents who care for sane, stable and complete family life in this and succeeding generations.

H. C. W. BAKER,

R. D. BAKER (Auckland).

GANDHI THE ASCETIC

Sir,—In his review of *The Selected Writings of Mahatma Gandhi*, W. B. Sutch states categorically, "Gandhi also preached birth control." I think you will find, Sir, that Gandhi preached no such thing. What he did preach was continence, and this explains the contradiction of his earlier statement which Dr. Sutch makes in his next sentence, "... in later years he advocated absolute chastity in and out of marriage." Now, I do not know whether Dr. Sutch was trying to sneak an odd one through the coverslips for the birth-controllers, or whether it is just a case of loose terminology, but there is all the world of difference, both morally and in practice, between birth control and continence (or absolute chastity). Any definition of birth control would, I think, be built around the phrase "artificial methods of limiting birth," and might possibly be widened to include the "rhythm" system of family limitation. The term has a specialised meaning for the general public, and if I remember rightly this specialised connotation was given it with a euphemistic flick of the tongue by the birth control advocates themselves.

Dr. Sutch says "Gandhi should become a saint." Maybe so, but saints

and birth control do not go well together. Gandhi himself told Mrs. Sanger in 1936, "We have not had enough education of the passions. I belong to a generation that believes that life is made for self-restraint in every way of life. Your generation believes in a multiplication of wants, freedom of all human passions."

I trust Dr. Sutch will be more careful with his terminology in the future, or else take a look around the field a little more closely before playing loose strokes.

D.E.H. (Wellington).

(Our reviewer replies: "What I wrote was, 'Gandhi also preached birth control.' His experiences in his early teens had given him a strong sense of guilt about sexual activity, and in later years he advocated absolute chastity in and out of marriage. 'All attachment to the senses is death,' is the Hindu doctrine, and Gandhi extended it; he saw sin in every sensual pleasure."

"My statement could, perhaps, have been improved by putting a semi-colon instead of a full-stop after 'control,' as I did after the phrase 'Gandhi extended it.' But how can anybody, after reading a column on the asceticism of Gandhi (from which the above quotation is an extract) be so obtuse as to suggest that the kind of birth control I was imputing to Gandhi was that of Margaret Sanger?"

"In quoting me out of context your correspondent also betrays himself by omitting my remarks on Gandhi's sense of guilt about sexual activity."—Ed.)

"LOOKOUT" SPEAKERS

Sir,—The comments of "Not a Newspaper Man" on the qualifications of New Zealand editors and leader-writers as radio commentators on foreign affairs carry a slight suspicion of irony. If, however, he is serious in his praise, a short period on the literary staff of one of our metropolitan dailies would soon disillusion him.

Wide knowledge of foreign affairs is uncommon among New Zealand journalists. Seldom do they go beyond their own news columns for information on this subject. Leader-writers provide the maximum of recapitulation of foreign news and the minimum of their own comment. (True, they often provide some other comment by re-quoting overseas editorial opinion that has already appeared elsewhere in the paper in the guise of news.)

Having had several years' acquaintance with both newspaper and university staffs, and being a frequent listener to this radio series, I am convinced that the university contributions have been far more informative than those from the Press.

Furthermore, since editorial opinion is synonymous with proprietorial opinion, the use of editors as radio commentators increases the already excessive influence of the newspaper proprietors on public opinion.

EX-NEWSPAPERMAN
(Wellington).

RETURN OF THE GOAT

Sir,—"Sundowner's" expressed wish that he might have been prevented from "making a fool of himself a second time" is rather contradicted by his ignorance revealed in his column in your issue of June 22. "Goats in a country created for cows." Can England not be considered a "country created for cows" just as much as New Zealand? Then why do so many English dairy farmers run dairy goats with their cows?

What has the cow done in this country in clearing the vast areas we have surrendered to blackberry, manuka, forde and broom? All these are excellent foods

providing a scientifically recognised source of vitamins for "Nature's most nearly perfect food"—dairy goat milk.

If "Sundowner" lives long enough (to which end a quart of goat milk daily would help) he may yet see this source of food utilised and dairy goat milk condensed and dehydrated in this country as it is today in U.S.A. and Great Britain.

Incidentally, Australia has well over 400 registered breeders of purebred dairy goats, many located in dairying districts.

Good dairy goats have to be imported, then bred and cared for. These "aristocratic" goats are producers, not of half-pints but of three or five quarts or even more daily, not for a few weeks but for ten months or two or three years if you wish. The British official record made last year by a Saanen goat was 6284 pounds 14 ounces milk in 365 days, i.e., practically 629 gallons of milk in a year. In Australia the record is 4192.5 pounds milk in 365 days, and for 273 days 3375 pounds milk. The goat making this record is now in New Zealand.

In New Zealand our dairy goats are coming along nicely and more of them may be heard in the near future, thanks to the "faddists" who have had enterprise and courage enough to risk the importation of high quality stock and to attempt to pioneer an industry which might yet mean as much to this country as it does to other countries "created for the cow."

V. C. WALLACE WRIGHT,

Convener, New Zealand Dairy Goat Keepers' Association (Invercargill).

(Abridged.—Ed.)

REARMAMENT AND INFLATION

Sir,—Referring to H. W. Youren's letter, July 6 issue, we should cease to talk of Communist Russia and speak of Nazi-Fascist Russia; for that is what distortion of and departure from early revolution principles has brought about. In 1946 Stalin called on the people of Russia to prepare for a third world war because "a peaceable settlement of economic difficulties is impossible under present capitalist conditions of world economy." That is the clue to Russian policy. The menace could and should be met on the purely secular plane. Rearmament alone will not meet the case; effective action means doing more than the rulers of anti-Russian communities are prepared to do. Unwilling to let the minds of their peoples dwell on the stark central issue, they becloud it by preaching, here and elsewhere, a holy war against anti-Christian Russia.

For instance, the people of the U.S.A. are told—with Christian churches approving—that it is God's intention that they should make the whole battery of appallingly devilish devices embraced in the rearmament programme and equip themselves and their friends therewith. They are allowed to contemplate, without protest, genocide, the extermination of whole communities, millions of human beings, by means of these devices used in the name of, and by professing disciples of, One who commanded: "Resist not evil; Love your enemies; Do good to them that hate you." The failure to recognise, admit, and face up to this monstrous moral and spiritual turpitude is today a major tragedy in a world of tragedies.

J. MALTON MURRAY (Oamaru).