

Sir,—To me, a veteran observer of the international scene, your fulsome praise of the United States' conception of freedom appears to be about fifty years too late to be convincing or to portray any approaching actuality. In my youth, having been taught to revere every thing American as the epitome of liberty and equality, I should probably have accepted all you have written as a well-earned eulogy; but my reading, observation and thinking over the past two decades have caused me to revise my opinions.

To begin with the much-lauded Declaration of Independence, how far from the noble ideals enunciated therein is the general operation of the law in America! One is led to the comment—"Yes, liberty and equality for all except those outside the racial and political pale." A notable exclusion from the names of great founders of America in all references to events leading up to the famous declaration is that of Thomas Paine, the Englishman who poured out talents and courage and risked his life and liberty to give the infant democracy a foundation of freedom and human justice. To come nearer our own day with its fear and fury would you, for instance, expect Jane Adams, once acclaimed as America's greatest citizen and recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize, who in her efforts against racial and political wrongs was often obstructed and frustrated in the land of her distinguished forbears, to agree with you? Or Paul Robeson, grandson of a slave, who has risen to international esteem, and yet—even before he tasted the full bitterness of political discrimination—had sent his son to live in the U.S.S.R., the only country, as he pointed out, where a coloured child could grow free from indignities and deprivation of human rights?

Recent manipulations of the United Nations Organisation in the interests of American foreign policy have so lowered the prestige of that institution as to make its name a by-word among the peoples of the world. Is this to be dismissed as a mere "symptom of extravagance or folly"—just a minor delinquency on the part of the "country committed to leadership in the western world?"

M. B. SOLJAK (Auckland).
(Abridged.—Ed.)

REARMAMENT AND INFLATION

Sir,—It was indeed heartening to read H. W. Youren's healthy reaction to the *Lookout* commentator of June 16. I too regard this speaker's opinion to be false, and more than false, dangerous, in that he affirmed the most hazardous line of contemporary Western policy. Upon the tacit assumption that armament expenditure for defence is the only solution, and therefore essential, we must accept the attendant inflation. But why accept the first assumption? It is a questionable assumption, a most risky assumption, and in being allowed to stand as though self-evident, the speaker sanctioned the political orthodoxy which is turning our world into a progressively worse place to live and die in.

In the interests of honesty and international morality the term "defence" should not be used in the context, "armament expenditure for defence." It is a heavily biased word implying the rightness of "our side"—"they" always being the aggressor, "we" always the defender—a quite inflexible rule. Defence used

in this manner is merely a partisan term bestowing in advance moral self-approbation.

Today it is almost an historical truism that maximum national war potential must lead, directly or indirectly, to war. That the governments of the Western nations are impoverishing their peoples now, and for an unpredictable number of years to come, to build up war strength merely that an admonitory finger may be shaken under Communist noses, is barely conceivable. Even were that their intention, a state of armed preparedness maintained over an indefinite period would reduce the Western world to a condition of barbarism—incipient signs of which are already becoming apparent.

How far is "the democratic way of life" going to survive this policy ostensibly designed to perpetuate it? If there is no war it will mean unrelieved years of intensifying austerity and government interference, as yet unthought of. If there is war it will be waged with all the Wonders of Science, on behalf of a way of life which will surely be lost in the holocaust. The result will not be a world freed from the threat of Communism but a world made safe for barbarism.

Of course, there is another policy, a policy dictated by Christian principles. Call it by less embarrassing names if you like, but as well as social justice and moral rearmament there must be economic justice. A world armament race automatically negates all of these. Such a policy might save the West, but it will not be followed.

SHELLEY FREE (Wanganui).
(Abridged.—Ed.)

ARMS AND THE SERVICE

Sir,—The cover of the programme issued by the Broadcasting Service for orchestral concerts bears the public arms of the Dominion, with two surreptitious additions—(1) the crest and wreath are borne on a six-barred helmet, traditionally belonging only to the arms of His Majesty, or a sovereign prince; (2) suspended from the ribbon that bears the motto is a harp. The second addition may be explained, if not justified, by the fact that the present conductor of the orchestra comes from the republic of Eire; but who authorised the first?

INQUIRER (Wellington).

(1. The "helm" is not a "surreptitious addition." Strictly speaking, a crest and wreath should always be shown on a helm, although for convenience of space, etc., the crest and wreath are normally shown without the helm. The six-barred helm is, as stated, the helm of the King, who is personally King of New Zealand as well as King of Great Britain, etc. Therefore, the arms of New Zealand are shown under the helm of the King. 2. The harp is not shown as part of the arms of New Zealand, and is not shown as suspended from the ribbon. It is merely a decorative part of the whole design and is symbolic of music (for which an orchestra exists). It is not an Irish harp but an ancient English harp. The whole design first appeared on the programme of the first concert given by the Orchestra, some years before the present conductor was appointed.—Ed.)

THE FAMILY AND SOCIETY

Sir,—I wish to protest strongly against the interruption of Alan Nixon's excellent series, *The Family and Society*, from IYC. These lectures were moral in tone and intention, factual in content, scientific in approach and discreet in language.

One would expect such lectures to seek truth and to uphold the values

which make a society good. Mr. Nixon's talks did so to a degree unusual, and were much more moral in effect than the average sermon. To interrupt them on the grounds that "such things should not be talked about" is ridiculous. If, for example, our illegitimacy rate is high, the important thing is to know it and do something about such an evil, not pretend for our comfort that it does not exist. The Good Samaritan had to look at the man criminally used, while the pious Jew for his own comfort looked the other way.

Surely we must have proper standards of censorship in the NZBS, those of morality, value and public interest; not just submission to the noise of the timid and self-righteous.

A minor matter. I understand that talks are cut after recording, and without consulting the lecturer. Should we not have the same courtesies on the air as in the press?

DOROTHY SOUTHERN
(Auckland).

PETER LLEWELLYN'S TALKS

Sir,—L. D. Austin voices the opinion of a number of listeners to Peter Llewellyn's talks. His most nauseating talk to date was on July 8, when most of his time was used apparently advertising for the brewers, and indulging in nostalgic reminiscences of public houses in England. Mr. Llewellyn, in quoting statistics, blamed the women here for the overwhelming votes in favour of early closing for public houses, and added, in a very arrogant tone—"What's it to do with them?" He repeated this more than once. Well, as one of the wives and mothers in this democratic country, I feel it has quite a lot to do with us. Mr. Llewellyn evidently is a throw-back from the bad old days when everyone over twenty-one was entitled to a vote, except minors, aliens, criminals, lunatics—and women. It's people like him who get us "Homies" a bad name here.

E. F. FRY (Wellington).

Sir,—I should say that L. D. Austin is quite devoid of a sense of humour to take so seriously, so literally, everything that Peter Llewellyn said in his recent talks. Whatever would L. D. Austin think of Robert Benchley? I wonder? I am a New Zealander born and bred and far from taking exception to any of the talks I must confess that they filled me with delight. Heaven help us if we lose our ability to laugh at ourselves. I thought Peter Llewellyn's observations shrewd and correct, with just the right amount of exaggeration thrown in for good measure. May we have more of such stimulating talks in the future, please?

R. D. HAMILTON (Auckland).

Sir,—From his criticism of Peter Llewellyn's summing up of New Zealand and the idiosyncrasies of its inhabitants, it is quite apparent that L. D. Austin lacks the common touch and is living in a world of his own superior conception. His dogmatic denial of the admirable assessment of our weaknesses—and strengths—by a man who is undoubtedly an expert observer of human nature is on a par with what we have come to expect from one who considers himself qualified to condemn Shaw as

a dramatic critic largely because his own godfather was a dramatic actor.

Since L. D. Austin counts himself fitter to judge New Zealand than Peter Llewellyn solely on the grounds of his longer residence here, may I say, as a New Zealander born and bred, with considerably more experience of the country and its people than he himself, that I accept Mr. Llewellyn's views as uncannily accurate?

Lastly, let L. D. Austin observe that whereas he states that he is an Englishman living in New Zealand, Peter Llewellyn refers to himself as a New Zealander. The psychological aspect of this attitude and the inference to be drawn from it are doubtless outside Mr. Austin's comprehension.

G. N. WESTON (Christchurch).

Sir,—So L. D. Austin is at it again! Just why cannot he confine his outpourings to subjects of which he has at least some knowledge? Being myself an average New Zealander, I am too inarticulate adequately to express my deep appreciation to Mr. Llewellyn for his talks on my own country and people.

OTAUTAHU (St. Heliers).
(Abridged.—Ed.)

Sir,—Poor Peter Llewellyn! Is it possible that his gamin wit is to be mistaken for serious censure? To me he is the droll jester, with his personal opinions given as metaphorical fingers at the nose to our way of life. Of course, we are not expected to take criticism from any unless we agree with it, but surely a healthy chuckle when a point finds its mark is good medicine? He was a wise man who said "The important thing is not what a man says, because freedom entails saying what one pleases, but is the critical faculty which analyses the saying."

LITTLE SUNBEAM (Hamilton).

Sir,—Once again L. D. Austin has spoken. He has attempted to criticise art, music, Miss New Zealand, and now criticism itself. He "feels himself competent to assert his knowledge," etc. Mr. Austin makes no attempt to demonstrate his critical powers.

We have no idea how long either Mr. Llewellyn or Mr. Austin has lived in New Zealand, but surely the longer one lives in a country the less competent he becomes to criticise it from an outsider's point of view. As New Zealanders, we could not attempt to criticise our country from that standpoint. Mr. Austin may be more qualified to criticise us than we are ourselves; but after reading so many of his letters, and finding so much evidence of the very thing he bemoans in Mr. Llewellyn—the warped imagination—we find ourselves unwilling even to concede his competency in this matter.

C. J. SAUNDERS.
D. C. PAGE (Wellington).

SILENT PRAYER

Sir,—Every Sunday at 9.0 p.m. we are asked to join in a minute's silent prayer while Big Ben is chiming and striking. To pray is to concentrate deeply. Do our religious teachers think it reasonable to pray during such a racket?

BACK BLOCKER (Coromandel).

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS
Auld Lang Syne (Hamilton).—Sorry, too long.
R.J.S. (Auckland).—Many thanks, but afraid quotation too long to be printed.
D.R.D.M. (Invercargill).—The matter has already been given publicity elsewhere.