

THE GERMAN OUTLOOK

Sir,—I wish to answer the misrepresentations made by Dr. J. A. Asher in his letter on my IYC talks, "Some Impressions of the German Liberal Middle Class." First, I did not, as Dr. Asher says, speak on "The German Outlook." I particularly dislike the glibness with which people talk about "The German Outlook," "The New Zealand Point of View," and so on, and even if I had known the subject exhaustively I should never have permitted myself to use more general terms than "Many Germans show a tendency."

As it was, in the first talk I gave, I said I did not know enough "to make general pronouncements," and I thought I had made it clear to even the least attentive of listeners that I considered I was "entitled to give only personal impressions of the beliefs and attitudes I found among a small, fairly homogeneous group of people." Furthermore, I said my impressions must necessarily be "superficial," "tentative" and "incomplete," and explained the reasons for this. Then, at intervals I repeated I had been in Germany "only a short time" (it was weeks, by the way, not months), and had "met only a few people," and I listed some important groups such as rural workers and the wealthy, with whom I had no contacts, and emphasised the fact that "they might well have thought differently" from the group I met.

Secondly, Dr. Asher implies that in order to give "a distorted picture" I have "carefully selected" from my experiences. Now, I object to that most sharply. It is not my habit to edit experiences in order to arrive at conclusions that please me. (Just why Dr. Asher should think that painting a "dismal picture" should please me is, of course, another matter.) I assure him that if I say I found "despair" and "poor morale" and "paralysis of will" among the "small homogeneous group" I met (and a number of whom I have written to from time to time over the last five years) it is because I did find them. Not even to please him can I say I met "vigorous" and "hopeful" Germans, though from my own reading and the reports of some friends I am prepared to believe a number of such people exist.

Finally, Dr. Asher makes the observation that "the truth is, of course, somewhere between the two extremes" of gloom and rosiness. Of course it is likely to be. If one collated my experiences with a small homogeneous group, with those of observers of factory employees, wealthy business men, clerks, rural workers, and the dozens of other groups which go to make up a complex Western society, it is probable one would then be entitled to generalise about "the German outlook," and probable also that one would find that outlook "the strange mixture" Dr. Asher writes about, somewhere between his "carefully selected rosy picture" and my unedited "sombre one."

PHOEBE C. MEIKLE (Auckland).

"IT'S IN THE AIR"

Sir,—Can anybody tell me whether the Ted Kavanagh accused of writing the comedy script for the NZBS show *It's In the Air* is the Ted Kavanagh who wrote *ITMA*? If so, I can only suggest that somebody has unearthed Mr. Kavanagh's first adolescent effort for a high school concert during his New Zealand boyhood! *It's In the Air* is about the corniest thing I've ever heard.

The vocal artists are adequate, but the alleged humour is appalling, and all the

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LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

more pathetic because everybody is obviously trying so hard without being funny at all. On behalf of everybody I know who heard the first show I suggest the NZBS save the money and give us more top-line BBC or American humour instead of local imitations. Let us realise our limitations and admit that local talent does not include an Edwards-Nichols-Bentley trio.

TAKE IT FROM ME (Devonport).

MENUHIN AND ORCHESTRA

Sir,—Allow me to express my deep appreciation of a concert of such glorious quality as that of Yehudi Menuhin and the National Orchestra fully broadcast to out-of-town listeners. It was a musical treat never to be forgotten. There can be no doubt, after that performance, that the National Orchestra is something for every New Zealander to be proud of. It provided the perfect background for Mr. Menuhin.

PAEKAKARIKIAN.

Sir,—Bouquets are due to the NZBS for their broadcast of Yehudi Menuhin's concert on July 24. It had everything that could be desired. A point of particular interest was the broadcast of an interview with Menuhin and his sister. It made me feel as though I had a personal interest in Mr. Menuhin, as I am sure it did many others who were listening.

R.I.G. (Raetihi).

CHURCH BROADCASTS

Sir,—A "Worshipper" would appear to have been unfortunate in the few Sunday Church broadcasts to which he has listened. As a regular participant (as a listener) to Sunday evening church broadcasts for several years, I have not experienced any annoyance or distraction from any of the "appalling things" referred to by your correspondent. No doubt, as in the case of most other broadcasts, there are faults and imperfections that might be remedied, but I suggest that such extravagant criticism is uncalled for. I would far rather listen to the broadcast of an ordinary church service, even though not without imperfections, than listen to a "studio" Sunday evening service. In the former I feel that I am worshipping as one of a company of others in the church, and that this conveys an atmosphere which seems to be absent from a studio service. You state, Sir, that "... the receiving of offerings—except during the singing of a suitable anthem or hymn—is contrary to the rules governing church relays." I hope this is not strictly the case. The receiving of the offering is an act of worship which may remind us listeners of our obligations. I have just listened to a Sunday evening service during which a reverent organ voluntary was played while the offering was being received. The minister named the piece, and explained that it was part of the corporate worship of his seen and unseen listeners. What could be more appropriate?

A.H.R. (Dunedin).

Sir,—I consider that the letter of your Auckland correspondent is a fair criticism of present-day church broadcasts. I do not know if he refers to Auckland services only. My radio does not record so far north, but his remarks, I think, might equally apply to further south. I tune in every Sunday, as I have not been to church for several years, but I do not always listen to the end. I will

not say anything regarding the preachers. Your correspondent has said sufficient. My complaint is more of the singing and choice of hymns and tunes. Much of the church music broadcast to my mind is of little religious or artistic value. How thrilled one is to hear the old familiar hymns and tunes of earlier days! How much more appeal there is in these than in so many of the tunes and indistinguishable words so frequently sung.

CHURCH MEMBER (Dunedin).

THE MYSTERIOUS UNIVERSE

Sir,—It is regrettable that "Ex Nihil" saw fit to conclude his pen-name with "I" and not with "o." Also, it seems inaccurate on his part to say you concluded your editorial with a comparison between "the patient investigations of science" and "the inspired guesses of religious thinkers." As I see it, you made no comparison; you said the former replaced the latter. This is true. For example, Galileo's interpretation of the celestial movements was called heresy, but the truth has prevailed.

If "one-eyed" means "of limited vision," it, like the word "bias," is, I think, more applicable to "Ex Nihil" than to you; and to Thomas Aquinas rather than to Galileo and to Mr. Hoyle. Your editorial displays breadth of vision. It is not biased in a materialistic direction. The investigations of science are not necessarily materialistic. I think mediaeval theology was more materialistic than modern science. Actually, you state one aspect of the materialistic argument, and then give the answering argument, namely, that man through consciousness receives the muted pulse of creativeness—in other words, that the soul of man contains a spark of divinity.

"E.N." holds that investigation into the nature and destiny of man should be left to trained theologians. Their record is not inspiring. St. Augustine declared that unbaptised infants descended into everlasting fire. St. Thomas Aquinas said that the felicity of the blessed was enhanced by beholding the torments of the damned. The Canon of St. Paul's says that life after death is a gift, which one need not have if one does not want it. Such are the results of what "E.N." calls "the patient investigations of religious thinkers."

EX NIHILO NIHI FIT (Timaru).

Sir,—A billion (1,000,000,000,000) is incomprehensible to most people. Bondi and Gold (according to *The Listener* of July 6) worked out that "if one atom of hydrogen was added to each quart of space every billion years the consequent stretching of space would cause the galaxies to recede at a speed agreeing with the rate of astronomical observations." The meaning of this would be easier to grasp had they said "if about four atoms of hydrogen were added to each cubic mile of space each year..."

W.B.B. (Wellington).

THE QUIZ KIDS

Sir,—Without detracting from the undoubted cleverness and even brilliance of many of the Quiz Kids, I can say that I quite agree with your correspondent "H.T." that frequently the answers "passed" are purely guesses that are really not at all clever. Another thing that astonishes me is that some of the children are so careless in their speech, often mumbling so that their replies are

quite unintelligible, while others, speak in a rather discourteous way. Is it not remarkable, too, that so many of these clever children—evidently chosen because of their scholastic attainment—speak with a most disagreeable, nasal voice?

If we are to take these children as representative of our secondary schools, then I say it is quite time that more attention is given to voice production, intelligent speaking and reading.

FRANK PENN (Remuera).

Sir,—I agree with "H.T." and "Auckland Listener." I enjoy the kids' session, but they get away with too much. They are too fond of asking the Quiz Master questions such as "Is it so-and-so?" or "Would it be...?" The asking of questions by the kids is on the increase, and should be stopped.

CONSTANT LISTENER (Pimmerton).

Sir,—I should like to support "H.T." On the occasion he mentions, we ourselves remarked upon the amount of guessing which was allowed to go through, but that was by no means the only time the same kind of thing has occurred. In addition to this, some of the contestants have a constant habit of asking, "Would it be so-and-so?" or "Is it such-and-such?" This session has been a most enjoyable one, and many listeners feel it will be a great pity if its standards are allowed to deteriorate.

M.C. (Christchurch).

Sir,—I would like to thank "H.T." for his letter. We always enjoyed listening to this session of clever children, till recently. We understood questions to the "Master" were barred, but now, he is asked as many questions as the "kids" are.

Let us get back to the session as it was first run, with the children earning their money. They can do it.

E.G. (Dunedin).

THE FAMILY AND SOCIETY

Sir,—I was amazed to read that Mr. Alan Nixon's talks on "The Family and Society" have been banned. Bernard Shaw's aphorism, that Religion, Sex and Politics are the only interesting subjects for intelligent people, is apparently taken most seriously by the NZBS, who have evidently come to the conclusion that the customers are not intelligent.

K. RUTHERFORD (Auckland).

WRESTLING RELAYS

Sir,—May I be allowed to refer to something which is very irritating to listeners-in, to wrestling broadcasts from Wellington? Here is an example: "That's the gong for the start of round four." Pause. "That's the gong," etc. . . Pause. Gulp. "That's the gong," etc.

This could justly be called "repetition of the obvious." If it would be possible for the commentator to listen to a replay of some of the commentaries made by Paul Boesch some seasons ago, I am sure he would benefit. Perhaps he will learn something when Don Arnold takes the mike. Yes, it's irritating. Also, why do listeners have to miss the first round on account of the weekly talk in Maori? Surely this item could be put over one of the auxiliary stations. Incidentally, I wonder how many Maoris listen to it, or whether they would not rather hear the first round of the wrestling.

WRESTLING FAN (Waikanae).