

THE PROGRAMMES

Sir,—I modestly claim that the gravamen of this appeal represents the ideas of some 25 or so middle-aged men and women in Auckland, mostly of secondary school or University standard, who feel deeply on the matter involved. Where has the music gone? Did it require the death of a loved monarch to give us two days, anyway, of superb radio listening, not merely enjoyment, but thought provoking and enhancing the finest pleasure of living?

My personal canvass of this group of listeners has revealed a very real and deep sense of disappointment, frustration if you like, in the private pleasures of a large group of listeners. Our weekly *Listener*, still, of course, the finest paper published in this country, is eagerly opened and read with appreciation. But the programmes! I am suggesting that the much vaunted New Deal in listening has proved an utter fiasco. I exclude, of course, the commercial stations, which to most of us are beneath comment. A time there was when, if I am not mistaken, great orchestras, ballads, good middle-brow stuff, was readily available each evening, and certainly all day on Sundays from at least one Auckland station. Now, although such evenings do sometimes come, one is bored and dismayed by long lists of appalling unknown operas, dreary sonatas, wretched trios, or works by modern composers seemingly without form. One knows the answer—"all tastes," etc., etc.—but is there any hope in sight for the ordinary chap who is heartily sick of all the clever-clevers and who pays his 25/- (soon to be increased) for one of the few pleasures left to the average suburbanite?

K.T. (Auckland).

(The ordinary chap in Auckland has the run of four evening programmes from Auckland's stations, to say nothing of others from stations further away. Is it really so difficult for him to find "great orchestras, ballads, and middle-brow stuff" within this choice? And does the catalogue of "appalling unknown operas, dreary sonatas, wretched trios, or works by modern composers seemingly without form" really so frequently extend through and over all these four programmes, or any of them? If "K.T." will help us by defining and exemplifying "middle-brow stuff"—the stuff he used, to hear, wants to hear, and now misses—we shall try to help him.—Ed.)

THE WRITER AS OUTCAST

Sir,—I enjoyed Professor Gordon's article very much. It forced me to examine a piece on which I was engaged with detachment and doubt, and for this service I thank him. Yet I find myself in almost complete disagreement with everything he says. I take it he is bored with the childhood pieces to which so many of us are addicted, and who can blame him? Yet can he in all seriousness suggest that this is because childhood is an unsuitable field for us to explore? At what age does one become worthy of a writer's attention? If writing is boring, the reason surely is that the writing is bad, no other. There can be no arbitrary dismissal of a whole field of experience which we all share.

As Mr. Summers suggests, the reasons for this preoccupation are much deeper than Professor Gordon allows. May I suggest, very tentatively, a hypothesis? Our modern determinist philosophies tell us that we are merely bundles of conditioned reflexes, economic or sexual propulsions, and all fashion an image of man as victim, a being who does not act, but is only acted upon. The ideal image for this passivity, for an aesthetic purpose, is surely a child, who clearly is not free to choose or operate his will. Further, all these philosophies insist

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that their conditioning takes place in childhood; they take as first commandment that the child is father of the man. So that I find the preoccupation which distresses Professor Gordon entirely typical and suitable for our time.

What we need, I feel, is not less work on childhood themes, but more. Let's write them in hundreds, our tedious little "opera" full of self-pity and crocodile tears, in the hope that this will prepare the ground for the emergence of a major literary talent who will synthesis all these footling little essays into one grand and definitive work after which, praise be, no more working of this particular vein will be possible. If however, after this, we are still writing works entitled: *The Agony in the Woodshed*, *The First Awakening*, or *The End of Summer*, I hope Professor Gordon will write to you in the sternest and most uncompromising terms.

BRUCE MASON (Tauranga).

BRITAIN AND GERMANY

Sir,—One wonders why you published the letter signed "Atlantic Pact," but as you have seen fit to print that letter I hope you will give similar publicity to this reply. Hitler habitually uttered falsehoods in an authoritative manner (as if they were profound truths) and your correspondent imitates him in this, as well as in his opinions. After telling us that Hitler predicted that "Britain would one day be fighting alongside Germany against Bolshevism," he continues, "and as Hitler was right about this, he could have been right about some other things."

The fact is that Hitler was about as right in that prediction as he usually was about everything, because as far as I am aware Britain is not fighting alongside Germany against Bolshevism, never has done so, and until events prove otherwise I see no reason to suppose that she ever will do so. What your correspondent has succeeded in doing is to demonstrate the sort of reasoning customary amongst Germans generally and Nazis in particular, thus establishing that he is living in the wrong country and at the wrong time.

He goes on to state that Hitler never wanted to fight England. Hitler never wanted to fight Austria, either, or Czechoslovakia, or Poland. He merely wished to take them over and bleed them to death without a fight. No doubt your correspondent would have been delighted if Hitler had fulfilled his ambition to take over the British Empire along with the rest of the world, since he is such an admirer of that merciless monster.

Perhaps the Führer was only kidding when he launched his ferocious blitz on Britain. Were there not thousands of innocent British women and children killed or maimed prior to the Mohne and Eder dams being bombed? To cite that as an example of British wrongdoing and yet to ignore Hitler's blood-thirsty, pitiless extermination of six million Jewish men, women and children; to pretend to deplore atheism and yet condone Hitler's systematic and unholy persecution of religious institutions is evidence of your correspondent's warped outlook.

H. WOOLF (Wellington).

(Abridged.—Ed.)

Sir,—While keeping in mind that ladies must always be ladies, I should

like to point out that the letter "Britain and Germany," appearing in your issue of March 21 has, in my opinion, a very funny smell. A sort of old Dauchau smell—if you remember what I mean?

FRANCES BLUNT (Kaikoura).

FOREIGN-LANGUAGE PAPERS

Sir,—I very much appreciated Professor Gordon's article on foreign-language newspapers in New Zealand. Quite apart from their usefulness as a bridge between the newcomer and his new homeland, I think such publications deserve sympathy rather than suspicion. It is not only that they make a good job of interpreting New Zealand to the immigrant; we should fully understand that our local newspapers cannot give the immigrant news about his homeland in which he is—and quite properly so—very interested. It matters little whether his own country is free and he left it voluntarily (as in the case of the Dutch), or whether it is occupied and the refugee newcomer therefore eagerly reads exile news. No man can live without his mother tongue or without a "home"—New Zealanders no less than the newcomers. You cannot endeavour to assimilate a man with neither; and I think you can assimilate him more easily if you recognise that he has a birthright to both.

In this connection I think that Mr. Cave's new series of broadcasts from Wanganui (also mentioned in your issue of March 28) could do much to bring us closer to a fuller understanding of language problems. Would it be possible to have the series recorded and later on released through more powerful transmitters?

HARRY J. BENDA (Wellington).

IMMIGRATION

Sir,—"Captain Cook" is to be congratulated on the views expressed on the dignity of domestic help (*Listener*, March 28). They are completely in line not only with my own thoughts, but also with the attitude that the Wellington organisation known as the Mothers' Helpers' Association is trying to foster in its work.

The work of a mother in her home is recognised as a noble vocation, and anyone who assists and relieves her in that work is entitled to similar respect. Nurses are paid for their services and often have to undertake humble tasks, but no one would suggest that this detracts from the high status of their calling; and so it should be with those who are willing to lighten the burden of people in need in the home.

Recognising this, the Mothers' Helpers' Association is tackling the problem of providing help where it is needed. The association is a small organisation at the moment, dependent on public subscription and Government and other grants to bridge the gap between what the average mother can afford to pay and what a capable and efficient helper merits as salary. But with adequate public support it is hoped it will be able to expand in the future and be of even greater service to the community than it is at present.

M. A. TILLER,
President, Mothers' Helpers' Association, Wellington.

Sir,—In a letter published in your issue of March 28, Mrs. Helen Garrett paints a gloomy picture of New Zealand

married womanhood. Surely it is the mind that determines one's personality rather than the crowded hours of "things to do." Many women with heaps of leisure time on their hands could be classed as "undistinguished mediocrities," but again, many of our busiest New Zealand mothers are very intelligent women, free thinking and well informed. One can always *think*, even though one is peeling a humble potato or scrubbing a floor.

Among the numerous hours dedicated to domestic chores surely there is always the hour to spare for reading that new book or thought-provoking magazine article, or for listening to a stimulating radio programme (with the inevitable knitting or sewing in one's hands). Domesticity need not be soul-destroying.

GRACE KROGH (Nelson).

BACH'S ORGAN MUSIC

Sir,—May I express my appreciation of the series of programmes now being presented from 2YA on Sunday afternoons featuring the organ music of J. S. Bach? The recordings used are good, and the programmes for the most part well arranged.

However, may I draw your attention to a somewhat misleading point which came up in the first programme featuring the *Little Organ Book*? The great chorale prelude on "O Lamb of God Most Holy" was presented as being a fine example of Bach's use of his grief motif, the descending chromatic scale. So it is, but it does not come from the *Little Organ Book*. It belongs to the *Eighteen Chorale Preludes*, written at a much later period of his life. There is, however, another version of "O Lamb of God" in the *Little Organ Book*.

There are other fine examples of the grief motif in the *Little Organ Book*, notably the beautiful prelude on "C Man, Thy Grievous Sin Bemoan."

THOMAS E. SIMS (Trentham).

"FAMOUS FRAUDS"

Sir,—It may be that the "skeletons" of the above series are founded on fact but for Hilda Scirr to put the *Readers Digest*—American edition—and *Magazine Digest* into the witness-box to substantiate their authenticity is surely putting a heavy burden on the credulity of the listener. I know that many of the younger generation are asked to and will swallow a great deal—be it printed, filmed, sung or said—without mastication. Hence the amount of mental unbalance which I, for one, would wish to check.

B. S. BARNETT (Napier).

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

R.L.H. (Raumati).—There is no cutting. It sometimes sounds as you suggest, but that is a peculiarity of the scripping and the reader's manner.

Wahoo (Christchurch).—It is agreed that an excessive emphasis, in spite of certain cautionary remarks, was placed on the possibilities of cure. This programme is being withdrawn. Thanks.

David Ellis (Auckland).—The series consists of short stories adapted from the work of American writers of high, often international, standing. Of the four already broadcast by 12B, two were by Ernest Hemingway and John Steinbeck. The Broadcasting Service does not buy V.O.A. programmes.

Novice (Marton).—The serial was completed in episodes specially written and produced, according to the stage the story had reached at different stations. Scripts not being available, the resumé you ask for cannot be prepared.