

## ANTI-SEMITISM IN RUSSIA

Sir,—Your correspondent "Ex-Popular Frontist," in criticising Mr. Edwards, does not bring forward one fact to show that anti-Semitism is tolerated in either Czechoslovakia or the Soviet Union, where it is a serious crime. He would, of course, find it difficult to explain why, in October, three Jews — Kaganovich, Mekhlis and Rayzer—were elected to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

Attention might be more profitably directed to the United States where, in spite of the fact that it contains the largest Jewish community in the world, there has been since the Civil War only one Jew in the Senate. Eisenhower's cabinet contains none. One might also be concerned with the fact that in New Zealand the beastly "Protocols of the Elders of Zion" circulate freely without any action being taken against publisher or distributor. It is even in the public libraries.

There is no anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union because in a society where man is no longer wolf to the man the economic basis for racism of any kind has disappeared. But our so-called "free world" needs a scapegoat and the whipping up of hatred and contempt for those of different nations, colours and beliefs is part of its very being. Surely the Jewish people have suffered enough. I cannot imagine a worse crime than that of torturing their minds by false allegations of persecutions against their co-religionists.

The bitter irony of it all is that the charges of anti-Semitism in Russia are made precisely by those who, in Germany, have been busily freeing and elevating to high office the perpetrators of the greatest mass-extinction of Jews in history.

JAS. W. WINCHESTER (Wellington).

## USE OF CHRISTIAN NAMES

Sir,—Contemporary social forms and usages have a certain importance, and it was refreshing to find such an unusual topic discussed in your interesting editorial. Without claiming any special knowledge I would like to hazard one guess as to why the English practice of equals addressing each other by surname is rarely followed in New Zealand. I say at once that I think the English practice a good one. It is democratic and makes for ease of social intercourse. So also the use of "Sir" which can be used equally to a stranger or to the King and at one time, as readers of Boswell well know, was in use among friends. I believe the disuse here and in Australia and the U.S.A. is due to our mixed origins. It is clear for instance that the English practice has never been generally followed in Ireland. Reference to the numerous memoirs of members of the Irish Bar over the last hundred years shows that the members commonly addressed each other by Christian name. Members of a circuit were admittedly a close-knit community and lived together while travelling, but this is not enough to explain it.

I do not think the surname use has ever obtained in England itself in the lower middle classes and lower ranks. Ian Hay says something about this somewhere. In Continental countries the use of surnames is unnecessary among acquaintances as other forms are applicable. The Spanish form of speaking to an acquaintance is to use the third person. "Usted" (i.e., "You") is a contraction of the Spanish for "Your Honour." I seem to have heard that in Poland there is a custom of addressing

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an acquaintance as "Pan," i.e., fellow-countryman, but in the Slav countries it is common, if we are to believe Russian writers, to address by the full Christian names and surname; which seems to us prolix.

Is there, I wonder, some treatise in which these matters are discussed?

INQUIRER (Wellington).

## CHURCH AND SOCIETY

Sir,—In implying that in the Protestant view the church is but "an infinite series of groups of like-minded individuals," and neither "an organic unity" nor "the Body of Christ" on earth, your reviewer "PIC" must, I feel, have given offence to many of your readers. Whether it was his intention to use the word "Protestant" in its popular meaning, or to allow it its proper historical sense, the fact remains that he has, in his review, publicised a notion that is not merely false and therefore misleading to the ill-informed, but also gratuitously offensive. This last may not have been intentional, but the patronising tone of his concluding sentences leaves me little doubt in the matter.

Finally, may I say that I have no wish to appear to defend the work reviewed. A reviewer is entitled to say exactly what he thinks about a book. This does not, however, in my opinion, entitle him to use his review as a vehicle to promulgate incidental inaccuracies of the magnitude of those I have referred to.

E. F. RIVE (Kaiaia).

Sir,—I have not read John Armour's Story of Christianity, but if "PIC's" review of it in *The Listener* is a fair one, it obviously would not make an admirable reference book for the Sunday Schools of Protestant sects—not at least those major denominations which are represented on the National Council of Churches, and the World Council of Churches. "PIC" may be an expert on the Ebionite heresy, but his words would suggest that the great new fact of our time (to quote Archbishop Temple) has not yet received his attention. It is hard to see how one who writes with such authority could fail to take into account the Ecumenical movement, which among other achievements has already brought about over 50 major acts of church union in this century; it is also hard to understand how anyone who has read recent Protestant theology from theologians of many branches of the World Church could see Protestantism accepting the view that the Church is an infinite series of groups of like-minded individuals.

The Protestant Church, like other branches of the Church, has betrayed her Lord time and again; but to suggest that she accepts the state of schism as the norm and denies that Jesus left behind Him "something which was to grow into an organic unity" is to show either John Armour or his reviewer to be a blind leader of the blind.

SELWYN DAWSON (Porirua).

## BBC ARTISTS

Sir,—In your issue of March 20 mention is made in "Open Microphone" of awards to various BBC artists for 1952-53. However, there are many who disagree, and I quote from an issue of *Everybody's Weekly* of January 10, 1953: By a majority vote, Britain's Radio-TV critics have chosen for *Everybody's* Gilbert Harding as The Personality of

the Year. Though the Radio-TV fans of Britain are equally divided into Harding-admirers and Harding-haters, none will quarrel with the fact that he was the most talked about person on the air in 1952. This is how the voting went: Personality of the Year: Gilbert Harding (Runner-up: Singer David Hughes); Best Series: *Edgaring Archie*; Best Comic: Al Read; Most Memorable Broadcast of the Year: The King's Funeral (Runner-up: "Journey from Silence"—an account of teaching children born deaf to speak); The Personality who should be given a rest: Richard Dimbleby and Wilfred Pickles (dead-heat).

I for one second the critics and not the *Daily Mail* in the last award, and I think something in this vein should be run in this country. Incidentally, Gilbert Harding has written or is still in the process of writing a book called *A Treasury of Insult*.

A.E. (Christchurch).

## THREE LANDSCAPES

Sir,—What does lack of "outraged comment" mean? Surely not acquiescence, as "Nature Lover" suggests—more, perhaps, disinterest or an implacable brooding. The critics are silent—and by "critic" I mean one who helps towards the understanding of a work of art, not one who tries to destroy. But can silence help? I think not.

I wonder how many readers did more than just turn over to the next page or look out of the window to see a better landscape. I pinned the poems on the wall because there were one or two "flashes" which in themselves held a promise of something better. However, one good line never constitutes, and never will constitute, a good poem, so my overall opinion remained unaltered. The "awkward" phrasing and choice of words still tended to retard rather than breathe in sympathy with the subject. But I feel it is wrong to deny a poem to such an extent as to suggest hurriedly turning over to the next page. General dismissal is no help to anyone, let alone the poets, who get more than their share of "popular criticism." So even if I reveal an opening for pens who like nothing more than swimming in a sea of controversy, I intend to say what I liked rather than what I disliked.

I liked the opening to Mr. Glover's poem (the first five lines) and I liked the line "The sea is slow and untaught." The rest of the piece to my mind "struggled," leaving an overall effect of flatness, a thing I do not think Mr. Glover wanted, although the poem concerned the cycle of erosion.

Mr. Day with his—

Totara ghosts whisper and lean  
Over the barbed-up riches rushing  
From long years in hidden caves

—made me feel that he had much more than the whole poem suggested, and could do better in descriptive verse than his "Franklin County" would lead anyone to believe.

In the case of Mr. Mitcalfe I admit some bias. I know the wild country and fiercely independent and beautiful river valleys, so that I can fill in in my own mind what is missing from "The days were measured by a beech tree burning." I feel that this same subject by the same author could be handled better and with more effect in prose.

Perhaps my cryptic notes are meaningless, but that does not matter. This

country is young, youth and vitality are inseparable; there is room—lots of it—for culture, and believe it or not there is a thirst for that culture. Not many of us can satisfy, but most of us can try.

To *The Listener* my respects, if not critical approval, for venturing to print the poems, and to the poets my gratitude for doing more than "feeling" the necessity for creative art.

J. W. BEATTY (Lake Waitaki).

## RETURN OF THE SCAPEGOAT

Sir,—I cannot deal with all the errors of "Paderewski," but there is one which in the interests of truth I really cannot let pass. Professing to quote from a book by Stalin named *Principles of Leninism*, "Paderewski" quotes Stalin as saying, "The dictatorship of the proletariat is the rule unrestricted by law and based on force." I can in mercy only assume that your correspondent has never actually seen the passage to which he obviously refers, for the real wording is vitally different from his account of it, which appears to be one of those distorted "quotations" that are going the rounds in certain circles. The quotation to which he refers, in distorted form, is on page 32 of *Foundations of Leninism*, by Stalin, who is, in turn, quoting from Lenin's well-known book, *The State and Revolution*. The actual quotation is, "The dictatorship of the proletariat is the rule—unrestricted by law and based on force—of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie, a rule enjoying the sympathy and support of the labouring and exploited masses."

This is very different from the picture drawn by "Paderewski" of an irresponsible government "that does not have to obey the law." Stalin then goes on to develop Lenin's theme that there cannot be equality between the exploiters and the exploited, i.e., between capitalists and workers. He makes the point that the dictatorship of the proletariat is "a democracy of a new type" and also "a dictatorship of a new type"—a dictatorship of the overwhelming majority over a tiny minority. "Paderewski" could have quoted this also from the same book and even the same page and I can only assume that he has not really read the book.

My point is not whether Lenin was right or wrong, but that in controversies of this sort a standard of fair and accurate reporting should be maintained.

SID SCOTT (Auckland).

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Sir,—No doubt those who run radio quiz programmes make many mistakes, but to say that the Rialto has rows of shops is not one of them. I have been in Venice quite recently, but thinking my memory might be at fault I referred to Nagel's *Italy in Three Weeks*, where I found on p. 103 "the Rialto Bridge with its two rows of shops."

VAPORETTO (Dunedin).

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

Sylvia Fox (Christchurch).—See page 7.  
Mrs. M. K. Hanan (Hamilton).—Doleman plays Fabian.

Ida Corkill (New Plymouth).—A little too emphatic, but thanks for the last two sentences.

Play Safe (Johnsonville).—Has no connection with programmes or with material published in *The Listener*.