

THE BABY IN THE HOUSE

Sir,—It is probably inevitable that any suggestion of meeting all baby's needs when they arise should meet with puzzled queries about the resulting muddle. It is hard to convince people that, for instance, demand feeding and routine are not mutually exclusive. It simply means that the baby is allowed to establish the routine in the first place, and it is not forced on him from without. I know that a mother who has had correct education and a completely unbroken emotional security throughout pregnancy and particularly during labour, then meets her child as nature intended, immediately after birth, establishing a good relationship at once, will have unwavering confidence in her ability to meet baby's demands. Her whole being is attuned to his, as it should be, and she has no need to give half her mind either to the clock, or to a "conscientious attempt to follow such advice."

The need for more attention to building mental health in our country has far too long been ignored. Likewise has its basis in good mother-child relationship from the very moment of birth. Medical people should begin with the parents: the mother, whose emotional needs during pregnancy and labour are of paramount importance, so that there is no stifling of instinctive maternal reactions to the child from the very beginning; and the father, who should cease to be a source for stupid jokes ("we never lost a father yet") or just a germ-carrier, and be accepted as an integral part of the emotional unit of father-mother-child.

The baby born into such an ideal environment establishes so easily the flexible routine your correspondent suggests that there is no strain or muddle, and he is a happy, serene little soul, a joy to the whole household, and a potentially stable adult.

J.B. (Opatiki).

DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT

Sir,—Everyone who desires to understand contemporary history should seriously study the Marxist theory of the state, of which the so-called "dictatorship of the proletariat" is a part. I feel that Mr. Boswell's recent letter does not contribute to that understanding. As one who has made a study of Communist theory over many years, I must say that Mr. Boswell's quotations are wrenched from their context. In particular, he fails to point out that the quotations refer to a period prior to the establishment of Socialism in the U.S.S.R. Lenin wrote during and of a period after the revolution of November, 1917, but in a period in which the new class faced "the more powerful enemy, whose resistance is increased tenfold by its overthrow," to quote Lenin's words in *Left-wing Communism*.

The "dictatorship of the proletariat"—a term coined by Marx from his extensive classical knowledge—is the means by which society is guided towards Socialism during a transition period in which state power is held by the working class, but in which the capitalist class still wields much economic and even political power. What is this transitional form of rule? Is it undemocratic, in the sense that it is the rule of a minority? Allow me to quote the classic definition of Lenin's, which has been used many times by Stalin: "The dictatorship of the proletariat is

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a special form of class alliance between the proletariat, the vanguard of the toilers, and the numerous non-proletarian strata of toilers (the petty bourgeoisie, the small proprietors, the peasantry, the intelligentsia, etc.), or the majority of these; it is an alliance against capital, an alliance aiming at the complete overthrow of capital, at the complete suppression of the resistance of the bourgeoisie and of any attempt on its part at restoration, an alliance aiming at the final establishment and consolidation of Socialism."

In view of the above quotations, which make it clear that the dictatorship of the proletariat was seen by Lenin as a dictatorship over the still powerful capitalist elements, what becomes of Mr. Boswell's idea that there is no "bourgeoisie" left and that therefore the dictatorship must be one of the Communist Party over the workers and that the Soviet people are to be led against the bourgeoisie of the capitalist countries?

The true spirit, the real historical significance of the Marxist-Leninist theory of transition from capitalism to Socialism, is conveyed in the following statement by Lenin: "Every citizen to a man must act as a judge and participate in the government of the country. And what is important to us is to enlist all the toilers to a man in the government of the state. That is a tremendously difficult task. But Socialism cannot be introduced by a minority, a party. It can be introduced by tens of millions of people when they have learnt how to do everything themselves." (Lenin, *Selected Works*, Vol. 8, page 320).

SID SCOTT (Auckland).

OPOSSUMS

Sir,—I listened this morning (April 16) to a short talk on the opossum broadcast to children from 2ZB, and although it was meant to be of an educational nature, the misleading statements it contained could only have been bewildering to the average listener. After comments on this animal's wide distribution in Australia and New Zealand and the probability of the listener being quite familiar with it, came a description of the animal itself—a creature which except for being a marsupial seems to have little in common with the opossum as we in New Zealand know it. Our opossum does not produce from five to 14 young at a time, does not feed largely on frogs and birds, and does not sport a naked tail except possibly as the result of some accident. I suppose the description given to be of the true opossum (*Didelphys*), found naturally only in America. Far from being widely distributed in New Zealand, it has, as far as I know, never been introduced, so it can surely be familiar to very few of us.

D. R. HAZLEWOOD (Manaiā).

THE KON-TIKI ARGUMENT

Sir,—This is my final letter in this discussion. I pointed out that "Viracocha" had erred in stating the Polynesians had no bow. He admitted his error, and now claims that in doing so he has won the argument by default. Queer logic! He has not replied to my statements regarding the Maori having access to big timber before coming to New Zealand. Perhaps he has no answer.

No carving in wood that we can prove is Moa-hunter work is known, but a few carved pieces have been found in

drains and swamps that are very unlike Fleet Maori work, and equally unlike British Columbian carving. Contrary to "Viracocha's" belief, the Moa-hunter artifacts in bone and stone, of which I have seen and handled a considerable number, bear no special resemblance to British Columbian work. Many artifacts, such as fish-hooks, found in various parts of the world, show a superficial resemblance, owing to the simple forms and the nature of the material, but differ widely in important details, e.g., Moa-hunter and Chilian fish-hooks look alike at first glance, but differ very much in the method of fastening the hook to the shank, which is important, because of the conservatism of primitive peoples on such details.

I refer "Viracocha" to the review by Dr. H. D. Skinner of Mr. Heyerdahl's book, in the latest *Landfall*. If, after reading it, he is still an adherent of the American-Polynesian hypothesis, I think it is unlikely that anyone will change his ("Viracocha's") beliefs on the matter. DOODLEBUG (Christchurch).

MALE AND FEMALE

Sir,—I was very interested to find your correspondent Kay Burley so zealous in her attempt to introduce the

FROM Monday, May 18, to Monday, June 1, inclusive, there will be a special prayer for the Queen during the 9.0 p.m. link. This is in response to Her Majesty's request that the people pray for her. The arrangements have been made in consultation with the Central Religious Advisory Committee. Prayers will be conducted by representatives of all the churches on the committee.

French word *commère* to local announcers. She apparently maintains that *compère* must be used only in speaking of male commentators.

However, before her platform becomes a part of the noble edifice of your language, the correspondent and others of her sex may be somewhat abashed to learn the further and more usual connotations of this word. *Commère* is often employed to denote a "gossip" or "busybody." Many savants have stated their belief that woman employs her natural intuition and creative powers in conversation, and that conversation is her art. So it would seem that the radio is an ideal field for woman to exercise her abilities. But if you introduce this term let us hope that your "female commentators" will give it a new dignity. CHAS. BADAUD (Auckland).

STRATFORD SHAKESPEARE

Sir,—Is not your correspondent "We Are Not Amused" inclining to be a little precious and pedantic? Apparently he is not amused because the Shakespeare readings he has heard do not agree with the volumes he happens to have on his shelves. There are many different Shakespeare texts, so I presume that the actors concerned used one more suited to their purpose, and perhaps Shakespeare's purpose, for surely he wrote his plays to be acted and not self-consciously recited. Shakespeare was an actor himself and is regarded (except by Shaw) as our greatest dramatist. This does not spoil his greatness as a poet. Drama and poetry are not incompatible if you "suit

the action to the word, the word to the action" (which, incidentally, aids comprehension even if metre does suffer).

It became evident to many of us who both heard and saw the performances of the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre Company, even if it was not realised before, that Shakespeare is still far from relegation to the shelf. You can try to put the old Bard in a literary coffin, but he will only break out again for the delight of ignorant people like myself who enjoy really good drama (whether in prose or blank verse) even if he has been cut, distorted and generally spoilt in the process.

IGNORAMUS (Palmerston North).

FILM REVIEWS

Sir,—Why does your critic "Jno." invariably review British films as though he has a grudge against everything British? His review of *Meet Me Tonight* is the latest case in point. Perhaps the whole film does not bear comparison with any of Somerset Maugham's, but Noel Coward is not disgraced.

Admittedly, the first playlet, "The Red Peppers," was weak except for the supporting actors. As for "Jno.'s" cheap comment on "Fumed Oak" I have yet to speak to anyone who saw the film who did not enjoy Stanley Holloway's handling of his part, and also that of his supporters. If "Jno." is a member of the local repertory and can act as well, he is wasting his time writing film reviews.

If, in the opinion of "Jno.," "Ways and Means" does not bear comparison with "The Facts of Life" or "The Ant and the Grasshopper," I venture to state that it does in the opinion of the majority.

Might I suggest that "Jno." forget Shakespeare as a space-filler when writing reviews and concentrate on the film itself? His quotation was in very poor taste. C.F. (Wellington).

"NO GRACE BEFORE MEAT"

Sir,—"Sundowner's" article "No Grace Before Meat" conjured up in my imagination the picture of superstitious rites in an underworld, where animal sacrifices were being offered to the false gods of a degenerate appetite on the altar of the human palate. Excuse it as we may, on the grounds of immemorial custom, means of livelihood, etc., the practice of eating the dead flesh of animals is but one stage removed from cannibalism and retards the onward march of civilisation.

A few more articles from "Sundowner's" able pen similar to "No Grace Before Meat" and the ranks of vegetarianism will enlist new recruits. And, who knows, seeing as he does so clearly the darker side of the meat trade, "Sundowner" himself may yet renounce the blood-stained chop and espouse the vegetarian way of living.

C.E.G. (Havelock North).

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

E.J.E. (Epsom).—Afraid the quotations make it too long.

Davey Admirer (Otahuhu).—Time did not allow entrants to be selected normally.

E.P.K. (Taranaki).—A letter for publication should be accompanied by the writer's name and address.

E.H.B. (Kohatunui).—It is good grammar. The alternative you suggest would merely allow you to avoid ending a sentence with a preposition—a result of doubtful value.

Piqued (Dunedin).—The local YA station received many requests to repeat the reviews. The change was announced four times on the Saturday and twice on the Sunday before the broadcast.