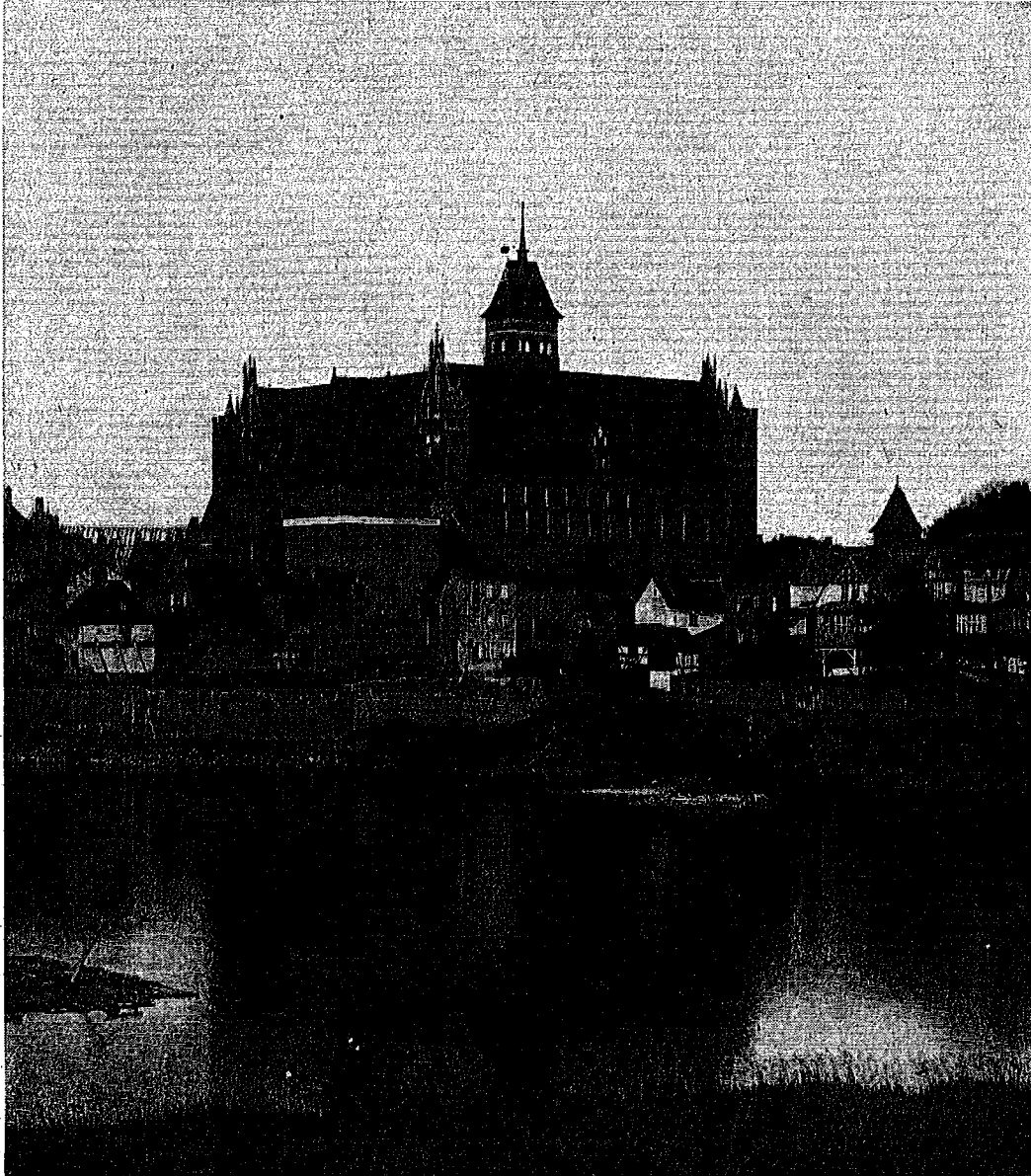


The Listener

Published every Thursday by The British Broadcasting Corporation



Castle of the Teutonic Knights at Marienburg, the East Prussian stronghold captured by the Russians on January 26

Front Line—Germany

(see page 117)

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Science and Human Affairs

By Professor J. D. BERNAL

ONE of the paradoxes of the present time is that people may be able to change the world so rapidly that they fail to understand what they are doing. Another is that, while more has been found out at large and in detail about the world than in the past thirty years than in the whole of history, there is less general appreciation of this knowledge and worse use of it than ever before. This is partly because modern science has become more complex, but as much because it has become professional. Since some people are paid to understand it, why should others bother their heads about it? But ignorance of science is a failure to understand the factors underlying the critical changes of our time. The history of the last few years should have been that it is no longer optional, but absolutely necessary, for science to be understood, appreciated and effectively used. The tragedy of the present struggle is that the ends for which we are striving—food, work, security and freedom—are gifts which science has put within reach of all. The resources, the energy and the ability to build a new world are there, but we have danger and bloodshed, want and misery. If people understand at least something of the possibilities which science offers, they would become more reasonably impatient of the present state, and more capable of changing it. For this, science needs to be expounded, and expounded in a new way which shows its relation to this changing world. It is no use any

longer attempting to present science as a series of pictures of the beauties or the mysteries of the universe and of nature. People have had enough of that already; it belongs to a time when individual and social security and the general running of society could be taken for granted. Indeed, the public is very justifiably irritated with the idea of the pure scientists' leisurely and secluded search after minute and remote things, when the world all around is being bombed to pieces; especially as the aeroplanes, guns, tanks and other engines of destruction seem to be the most noticeable products of scientific research.

But in any case the scientists themselves are no longer anxious to present a merely academic picture of a disinterested search after truth combined with a sublime indifference to the result of discoveries. Science has long been much more than this. It has become an integral part of productive industry and agriculture; it maintains health; it is increasingly involved in business administration and government. The methods and ideas of science are the dominant forms of thought and action in our time. Science is no longer a spare-time occupation of a few dozen gentlemen of leisure, it is the whole-time job of some hundreds of thousands of research workers in nearly every country of the world. Science has become an industry, a small, but key industry. The cost of scientific research is borne directly or indirectly by industrial contributions, and already there are far more scientists working

Points from Letters

THE LISTENER undertakes no responsibility for the views expressed by its correspondents

The Good and Bad in Art

No doubt many were disappointed that Sir Kenneth Clark should mar an otherwise acceptable talk by his closing words. It was a steep decline, indeed. It is true that 'visiting the average mixed exhibition is like listening to an orchestra in which only a few players have learnt their instruments'—but so it always was, as long as average mixed exhibitions have been held, and so it always will be. But there is no necessary relationship between the average mixed exhibition and what is generally recognised as good modern art; and there are many with both the faith and the courage to say that much modern art is good.

Personally, I fail to see any decline in standards of value whatsoever in contemporary English painting; and to say that there has been a decline in technical standards is not quite to the point. Sir Kenneth is, of course, aware that a good technical achievement is nothing by itself, and can only be taken into account as a means of expressing other qualities of a work of art—spiritual qualities, for the want of a better word. Much modern art may be deficient from the point of view of technical perfection (though this may be questioned), but it can hardly be said that it is lacking in spiritual content, in originality of approach, in breadth of vision, and in significance for the modern mind. It is significant too that though art critics are now fewer in number, most of those which remain give their support to the modern school: and it was disappointing to hear the Director of the National Gallery suggesting that the work of recent years was definitely 'not so good'.

Preston

D. DUCKWORTH

War and the Artist

Mr. Taylor in his talk on 'Goya and War Art' wonders why artists of the present time have omitted their protest against the horrid mutilations of battle. Artists are said to reflect the spirit of their times. Apart from the fact that Mr. Taylor seems to have forgotten the advent of the camera and the wider circulation of the press, whose business it is to comment upon the phases of things, this is a time for dispassionate enquiries, searching into causes rather than effects. Since the last war with its spate of indignation, this generation has come to realise that mere protest is useless. Painting has ceased to be literary and thereby has become neutral, but it is no coincidence that artists as a class take a keen interest in all social and political reform.

We know that the causes of war lie not in our failure to distinguish between good and bad policies, but in our moral weakness; in our being unwilling to make certain sacrifices, such as of money to ensure a better standard of living for some classes; or of leisure, to be spent in becoming acquainted with the machinery of government, thus checking by means of an informed public opinion, elements that are not working for the good of the whole.

In spite of this one feels that both Sir Kenneth Clark and Mr. Taylor can take comfort. Are there not evidences that civilisation is putting down roots in the face of the storm, that will later bear flower in a worthy tradition.

Winscombe.

THEA BROWN

On page 68 of THE LISTENER of January 18, your contributor J. B. Taylor says that Goya's

attitude to war is almost unique and that none of the artists between Uccello and our own day who deal with war approach the deep seriousness of his etchings.

Would it not be fair to make an exception in the case of Jacques Callot, whose engravings of the thirty-years war parallel those by Goya of the Peninsular War?

Bath

C. THATCHER

Science and Life

Professor Haldane's letter in your issue of January 11 illustrates the curiously undeveloped value-sense characteristic of the scientific mind. It is folly to put lethal weapons into the hands of the criminally inclined, but science places her dangerous inventions in the disposal of every common gangster, not realising that character is a great deal more important than intellect. Herself amoral, she has sapped the foundations of society by teaching men to be promoted apes and preaching survival of the fittest by struggling for existence. A moribund superstition has plunged humanity into depths of suffering never reached before, and to what do all men now appeal to save them from this hell of glorified brutality and sanctioned murder—to aeroplanes and 'wireless', transcendental physics and the higher mathematics, or to the time-honoured precepts of religion?

If experience can teach us anything, it has taught us that science has been worsted in her conflict with her rival. Relativity and quantum theory are very well, but the heart is stronger than the head, and humanity is ruled by feeling, not by thought. Teach men to feel aright and they will act aright, and it matters very little whether their notions about the structure of the universe or the constitution of the atom be true or false. Not my business to educate emotion, says the man of science. Precisely so; he does not understand his business, or he would devote himself to conquering human nature before he undertook to conquer nature. All agree that man is not yet worthy to possess the knowledge he has won; if so, science should impose a discipline of chastity and self-denial on her pupils and deny admission to the mysteries of nature to the morally unfit.

Eastbourne

R. K.

White Bread

I am in no way surprised to read Mr. Shelton Smith's letter in the current issue, replying to Mr. Straker. I am amused at his attempt to dispel alarm in what he calls a statement of the facts.

He carefully avoids any comment on what the Radio Doctor meant—that it is because the white bread is minus much of the goodness of the whole wheat that we must regret the passing of the pre-industrial revolution natural loaf. Why is the Ministry satisfied even to allow the loss of nutritional value implied in its announcement, small though it be? Why does it not tell us the truth—that the milling industry has so far got matters into its own hands that it is able to make three profits on every sack of wheat which comes into its hands—one on the white de-vitalised flour, one on the germ removed and sold as vitamin food, and one on the remaining offals for livestock food.

Added to this, the Ministry has allowed a

fourth profit in war time, that made by addition, forsooth, of vitamins (synthetic) to place those taken out by the miller. Does Ministry not realise that the passing of the land regional millers means that the combin millers have a monopoly of flour in this country produced in their mills situated at ports. They are the facts, 'in case Mr. Shelton Smith's I should mislead your readers'.

Rochester

RICHARD D. ENGLISH

As a housewife who has to cook with the present-day flour, and who has with great distaste to present-day bread, I challenge the Ministry Food to present to the public an honest recipe from a scientist who is also an expert on nutrition, duly signed, stating that today's bread as good as the bread we had ten months ago. It is unpalatable and clings to the teeth causes indigestion. If I may say so, we are not all interested in the opinions of millers and milling engineers. Their interests may not coincide with ours.

Seaton

LEONORA N. ERVH

I read the Radio Doctor's comments on the of English farm-labourers in 1740 with astonishment. Surely it is quite unscientific to draw a generalisation covering the whole country from a single example—and an example source of which is not stated.

Quite apart from this aspect of the argument I would join issue with the Radio Doctor the question whether wheat, with or without the whole germ, formed any part of the diet of the majority of farm-workers, or even of the small farmers, of that time. Contemporary records show that not only was wheat not part of the diet of the population of wide areas of the countryside; it was not even grown in parts. Even where wheat was grown an couplet runs:

Sell wheat and buy rye
Say the bells of Tenbury.

Rye was the bread-stuff cereal in many of the light-soil districts into which the Norfolk 1 course had yet to be brought by the effort of enlightened landlords and such propagandists as Arthur Young. Oats was generally eaten in the hilly counties of the western half of the country and in the north. Various diluents peas and beans were used in lean years because of poor roads and lack of transport prevented carriage of heavy goods like grain except by pack-trail or where convenient and navigable rivers existed, so that although the country was to export wheat to the Continent, it was impossible for one neighbourhood with a harvest to assuage the hunger of an adjoining place where the harvest had been poor.

For all these reasons it is emphatically incorrect to suggest that the rural population in 1740 was eating bread made of whole-germ wheat however good the modern dietician may siffer that non-existent article.

London, N.W.1

G. E. FUSSE

Edward I and Westminster Hall

In a recent issue of THE LISTENER, a correspondent takes exception to a remark I made in a recent talk on Westminster Hall, viz., 'Edward I had the bad taste to have it washed' (the italics are mine).

Of course the fault is mine and I apologise.

r. Powell for any offence I may have un-
 uly committed against his respect for
 rd I: I am afraid I never anticipated that
 I intended to be a mild joke could be
 rned into a serious reflection on the
 ic sense of that monarch, and I hope that
 spirit is now conscious of things on this
 , his sense of humour will acquit me of the
 e. After all, kings of England do not go
 t whitewashing great halls for fun, and any
 nt of ancient buildings must surely be
 e of the use to which limewashing was put.
 this case if Mr. Powell cares to refer to the
 of Giles de Audenard which is given in the
 robe Accounts entered on the Chancellor's
 of 5 Edward I, he will find an account of
 exact uses to which the 906 sacks of lime
 put in various parts of the hall. He will
 further details in Brayley and Britton's
 ory of the Ancient Palace and old Houses
 Parliament at Westminster (which has the
 ority of the Chronicles of Matthew Paris
 of Rymer's *Foedera*, etc., behind it) and in
 nite admirable article by Miss Ivy Cooper
 ished in the Journal of the British Archaeo-
 ological Association in 1937, to both of which I
 indebted for much of what I said in my
 I can only hope that this letter will white-
 me in the eyes of Mr. Powell.

London, S.W.1 HENRY J. F. BADELEY

I am the Dauber

as interested in the letter of your corre-
 spondent Mr. Alfred H. Powell in THE LISTENER
 January 18. But since a medieval workman
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 ges to Adam the Dauber'.
 Compare the name of a late medieval chron-
 ic: *Chronicon Adae de Usk*. Ed. Sir E. M.
 wnde Thompson (London, 1904).
 London, W.11 F. D. WARD

Poetry in War Time

Grigson challenges Mr. Henry Reed's ideas
 ut war-time poetry because he does not find
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 emporary poets by Mr. Reed in his first article.
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 wn outside the literary periodicals?
 I am neither so foolish as to lay it down
 otely that public (mis)quotation is a test of
 etic merit nor sufficiently arrogant to assert,
 the light of the results of such a test, that

Mr. Reed's poets have no merit and that there-
 fore the title of his articles should have been
 'Rubbish in War Time'. But what I do assert
 unhesitatingly is that if we admit that people,
 however they may respect contemporary poets,
 do not quote them, then what Mr. Reed means
 by poetry and what it means to the *homme*
moyen esthetique are two entirely different and
 distinct things. Counting myself among the
 latter, the more present-day poetry and poetic
 criticism I read the more I realise that I only
 deluded myself in ever thinking I understood or
 appreciated poetry. What I got was merely the
 potent but cheap thrill at the sound of mysteri-
 ous but unobscure words.

Poole

GEORGE RICHARDS

Nazism and Humanism

In his talk entitled 'Worship of God or Man?'
 Dr. Micklem attempted to identify the Nazi
 philosophy of 'blood and soil' with the
 scientific humanism put forward by certain
 eminent biologists in this country. I would like
 to point out that the definition of nazism
 quoted by Dr. Micklem is somewhat inadequate,
 as it says nothing about the *Herrenvolk* doctrine
 of German superiority or the anti-democratic
 Fuehrer principle, both of which are essential
 to the evil we are fighting and which provide
 the Germans with a moral sanction for all
 atrocities they have committed.

Although humanism is agnostic with regard
 to deity, it is based on a recognition of the
 fundamental unity of all mankind, and definitely
 repudiates any idea of racial superiority, or in-
 deed of any absolute racial distinction. Therefore
 the two philosophies, nazism and humanism, are
 not fundamentally related but are diametrically
 opposed. Humanists believe in the value of the
 individual and the importance of personal free-
 dom not as divine laws but as truths derived
 from human experience and history.

Edgware

G. A. ALLAN

Inoculation Against Diphtheria

In your recent review of Dr. Stephen Taylor's
 book on social medicine, you stated that child-
 ren should be inoculated against diphtheria
 with the 'appropriate serum'. I should like to
 point out that serum is not used in diphtheria
 prophylaxis. This, of course, is only a small
 point, but I feel that coming from so well-in-
 formed a journal as yours and dealing with so
 well-informed a public, it should not be over-
 looked.

Coulsdon

R. E. REWELL, M.D., M.R.C.P.

Pedal Piano

Is Mr. McNaught serious when he says that
 'Bach's Trio Sonatas are needlessly put out of
 running as piano music, because the pedal part
 requires a second pianist'. Can it be that the
 resources of the B.B.C. fail in the provision of
 a 'Pedalier'—as pedal-pianos were originally
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 arranged Vivaldi's Concertos, wrote a Passacaille
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 other lesser known composers, V. Alkan (Op.
 64, 66, 69, and 72) contributed many interesting
 compositions for the pedal piano. There can be
 no dearth of capable performers—many organists
 regularly practise at home on a pedal-piano—
 so that it should not be difficult to discover a
 worthy exponent of this delightful medium. For
 many years I have used a pedal-piano for practice
 and enjoyment of organ music at home, as well
 as for the study of the above works and would

welcome an opportunity of hearing them played
 upon a good pedal piano, by a first-rank pianist.

South Norwood REGINALD L. BRANSDEN

Standard English

We should like to thank Mr. Martin Armstrong
 for his reply to Mrs. Harry's talk. Speech is
 a means of communication, and, among people
 in a particular district, dialect is often a far
 better means of communication than Standard
 English. The latter becomes useful to the dia-
 lect speaker when he moves outside his natural
 environment.

The teacher's aim should be to help him to
 acquire Standard English as well as his dialect,
 so that when he leaves school he need not be
 tied to any one class or district. But to set out
 deliberately to kill dialects seems as wrong as
 to try to preserve them artificially.

MARJORIE GULLAN
 President, The Speech Fellowship

The Post-Impressionists

(continued from page 124)

painters were, alas, against us—but it also pro-
 voked lectures from mental specialists. Fry him-
 self did not make one penny out of the exhibi-
 tion, nor did he out of the Omega workshops,
 which he started seven years later. Indeed, by
 introducing the works of Cézanne, Matisse,
 Seurat, Van Gogh, Gauguin and Picasso to the
 British public, he smashed for a long time his
 reputation as an art critic. Kind people called
 him mad, and reminded others that his wife was
 in an asylum. The majority declared him to be
 a subverter of morals and art, and a blatant self-
 advertiser.

I believe few people know the position Roger
 Fry occupied in the world of art when he took
 this enthusiastic and disinterested step. In 1905,
 he had been appointed to the Directorship of
 the Metropolitan Art Gallery in New York.
 And it is worth mentioning that immediately
 after accepting that American offer he learnt
 that he might have stood successfully for the
 Directorship of the National Gallery. Thus,
 when he started the Post-Impressionist Exhibi-
 tion, he was already right at the top among
 European connoisseurs and art critics. His
 reputation carried weight in the world—but it
 couldn't carry that exhibition.

What enabled him to risk such a position
 without a backward glance of caution? It was
 not courage, but something rarer—a faculty for
 response, an irresistible joy in discovering un-
 recognised beauty. He was not only the most
 analytical of English art critics, but the most
 open-minded; and this power of making dis-
 coveries was connected with a trait in him which
 was amusingly at variance with his strong
 intellect. He had taken a double first at Cam-
 bridge in science. Yet he was a credulous man.
 Yes, there were times when I used to exclaim:
 'Roger, you'd be the greatest of critics if only
 you would sometimes listen to the still, small
 voice that whispers: "Fiddlesticks!"' He was
 always ready to believe, for a time at any rate,
 that someone had done something or was trying
 after something which might prove enormously
 important. Does that seem an inconsistency in
 a man of scientific training? Well, recall Dar-
 win's 'fool' experiments, as he described them—
 how he would play the trumpet to his orchids
 to see if they were affected. No: the fact is
 entirely sensible people never discover anything
 in this world.—*Home Service*

I challenge the Ministry of the public an honest report ho is also an expert on nutri- stating that today's bread is ead we had ten months ago. and clings to the teeth and If I may say so, we are not at opinions of millers and mill- eir interests may not coincide

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G. E. FUSSELL

Westminster Hall

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and of Rymer's *Roadera*, etc.; dening it and in quite admirable article by Miss Ivy Cooper published in the Journal of the British Archaeo- logical Association in 1937, to both of which I was indebted for much of what I said in my talk. I can only hope that this letter will white- wash me in the eyes of Mr. Powell.

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(continued from page 124)

painters were, alas, against us—but it also provoked lectures from mental specialists. Fry himself did not make one penny out of the exhibi- tion, nor did he out of the Omega workshops, which he started seven years later. Indeed, by introducing the works of Cézanne, Matisse, Seurat, Van Gogh, Gauguin and Picasso to the British public, he smashed for a long time his reputation as an art critic. Kind people called him mad, and reminded others that his wife was in an asylum. The majority declared him to be a subverter of morals and art, and a blatant self- advertiser.

I believe few people know the position Roger Fry occupied in the world of art when he took this enthusiastic and disinterested step. In 1905, he had been appointed to the Directorship of the Metropolitan Art Gallery in New York. And it is worth mentioning that immediately after accepting that American offer he learnt that he might have stood successfully for the Directorship of the National Gallery. Thus, when he started the Post-Impressionist Exhibi- tion, he was already right at the top among European connoisseurs and art critics. His reputation carried weight in the world—but it couldn't carry that exhibition.

What enabled him to risk such a position without a backward glance of caution? It was not courage, but something rarer—a faculty for response, an irresistible joy in discovering un- recognised beauty. He was not only the most analytical of English art critics, but the most open-minded; and this power of making dis- coveries was connected with a trait in him which was amusingly at variance with his strong intellect. He had taken a double first at Cam- bridge in science. Yet he was a credulous man. Yes, there were times when I used to exclaim: 'Roger, you'd be the greatest of critics if only you would sometimes listen to the still, small voice that whispers: "Fiddlesticks!"' He was always ready to believe, for a time at any rate, that someone had done something or was trying after something which might prove enormously important. Does that seem an inconsistency in a man of scientific training? Well, recall Dar- win's 'fool' experiments, as he described them— how he would play the trumpet to his orchids to see if they were affected. No: the fact is *entirely* sensible people never discover anything, in this world.—*Home Service*