

# THE BRITISH BROADCASTING CORPORATION

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June 14th 1968

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Dear Matt,

"A Plague on Your Children" went out on June 6th as planned. We've had a full time coping with the backwash ever since... We don't know what size the audience was - we shall have the figures next week - but there is no doubt that the impact on the public and the press has been very powerful indeed.

You may have seen the report in The Times for June 7, but every national daily covered the programme, sometimes in two places - the news pages and the TV column. Four dailies ran leaders on the programme. Sunday papers and magazines also ran reports, crits and leaders. All have been in our favour. Many readers' letters are being printed and some good arguments are developing. (There was already one going to the The Times and the Observer before we went out). We are also getting letters, many of the sort that ask for the address of the recently formed anti-CBW league. There have also been two brief further discussions on TV and a couple on radio.

The big follow-up discussion on the night of the programme never took place thanks to the Kennedy ritual murder which also happened. There is still some talk of doing a big discussion sometime though we feel it is less necessary now because the public debate we hoped to spark off is raging anyway.

One national paper, the Sun, has been running a daily campaign since our programme went out, mostly on the front page. Yesterday they printed a two-page spread of excerpts from our script with pictures from our film. I believe they got your permission to use an excerpt of yours. We are very grateful for that too.

The revelations in the programme also sparked off questions in Parliament. Tam Dalyell MP is keeping up the pressure - he must have asked dozens of questions by now. (He's also in Parliamentary trouble for having leaked to the Observer information obtained by the Select Committee on Science which took evidence at Porton shortly after we were there). He's Labour of course but even the Conservative Sunday Telegraph had a leader calling for less secrecy at Porton and a review of its relations with the USA. In Nature for June 8 you will also see a leader on somewhat similar lines.

PTC.

A final touch of fun has been provided by the decision to open Porton to selected visitors from next year - a gift to cartoonists. I shall send you a sheaf of cuttings as soon as they have been collected and xeroxed. We're calling it "the continuing story of Porton Place"... I shall also send you a copy of the script as soon as a reliable one is available. If you are over in London sometime we may be able to arrange a private viewing of the film for you but I must warn it is a gloomy experience.

In the clearing up process one of the things I have to do is return some manuals to Elinor Langer who broke off contact with us rather abruptly when she was over here. Have you any idea where I might contact her now?

All in all I am finishing work on "Plague" with a strange reluctance. For six months it has been my main preoccupation - and a most exciting one. Most subjects will now seem tame for a while. Can't you arrange some spectacular breakthrough in molecular biology for me to cover?

All the best for now, and again many thanks.

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