

EDITORIAL

FORTY YEARS of desperate emergencies, wars, and factional conflicts have reduced the creative body of ideas once known as "Marxism" to the state orthodoxy of "Marxism-Leninism-Stalinism" on the one hand, and to its stunted opposite, dogmatic Trotskyism, on the other. But revulsion against these orthodoxies has strengthened the traditionally pragmatic and anti-theoretical bias of the British labour movement, and has narrowed its internationalist outlook and diminished its revolutionary perspectives.

The career politician, with his inevitable pre-occupation with manoeuvres and expediencies, dominates the political field. And the vigorous Left movement, expressed in the main around TRIBUNE, has itself tended to fight shy of theoretical discussion' or extended analysis, preferring to trust to the robust intuition of Mr. Be van. In doing so it has failed to win the complete confidence of that great body of socialists who desire not only to act but also to understand the context and aim of their actions. The energies of the labour movement have been weakened by the snapping of links between socialist intellectuals and those who bear the brunt of the practical work of the movement.

THE NEW REASONER hopes to make some contribution towards re-establishing these links and regenerating these energies. In the political field, we take our stand with those workers and intellectuals in the Soviet Union and E. Europe who are fighting for that return to Communist principle and that extension of liberties which has been dubbed "de-Stalinisation"; in Britain with those socialists on the left wing of the Labour Party, or unattached to any party, who are fighting under very different conditions, for a similar re-birth of principle within the movement. We have no desire to break impetuously with the Marxist and Communist tradition in Britain. On the contrary, we believe that this tradition, which stems from such men as William Morris and Tom Mann, and which later found expression in the cultural field, in such journals as LEFT REVIEW and MODERN QUARTERLY is in need of rediscovery and re-affirmation. It is our hope that we may be able to build some bridge between this tradition and those left socialists who — in the era of Stalin's birthday and the Doctors' Plot — developed their thought altogether outside it.

THE NEW REASONER will carry material of three kinds. First, theoretical and analytical articles of some length (as well as briefer review articles and commentary). Second, documents, translations and commentary on the international socialist and communist scene. Third, a wide range of creative writing — short stories, polemic, satire, reportage, poetry, and occasional historical or critical articles — which contribute to the re-discovery of our traditions, the affirmation of socialist values, and the undogmatic perception of social reality.

If this number has too marked an international bias for some readers, we promise to redress the balance in future numbers, with detailed studies of British problems and writing from British sources, some of which are already in preparation. Finally, we remind our readers that THE NEW REASONER is responsible to no political organisation, and can expect no assistance in sales promotion. Therefore the goodwill of readers, as publicists, sales promoters, critics and contributors, is essential to our success.

J.S. E.P.T.

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