

Editorial

A quarterly journal is bound to assume a certain character of aloofness from immediate events. Its main contents are planned three months in advance of publication; the "news" which is fresh at the planning stage would be stale at the time of appearance; while in the interval between planning and publication new events intervene - Governments may change, industrial struggles flare up, or red dust may be splashed on the moon. This is a partial answer to those readers who wish to know "the Reasoner position" on this or that problem. We can provide information and analysis of the deeper trends behind the news, but the application of this analysis in more immediate terms must be carried on by our readers within the organisations of the labour movement.

Moreover, we are struck not so much by the "ferment" as by the fragmentation - politically and organisationally - of the Left in Britain today. Among a minority there is certainly a new spirit of criticism abroad!; but side by side with this there is a good deal of bad blood accumulated from the past, as well as personal antagonisms and suspicions of the motivations of those who are competing for the leadership of a disunited rank and file. If post-Budapest Marxism and post-Brighton Bevanism present a picture of recrimination and political confusion, then the most useful contribution we can make towards the rediscovery of principled unity on the Left will be to get on with the work of analysing contemporary society - and especially British society - from an independent and undocinaire standpoint while leaving alone for the moment those questions of personality, faction, or political expediency around which so much rancorous feeling has gathered. Moreover, this will also be the best way to prepare the way for the formation of constructive socialist policies in the near future.

We are as angry as are our readers about the adoption of *Industry and Society* by the Brighton Conference. But we are also aware that the victory of the Right at Brighton is rooted in ten years of research, publication and propaganda, in which the *New Fabian Essays*, and the work of Mr. Crosland for the Right and Mr. Strachey for the Centre are landmarks. It is futile to counter this work merely with denunciations or with policies derived from the study of society in the Thirties or in the First Great War. We need more analysis and factual information of the quality of John Hughes' study of the steel industry (in our last number) and of the recent *U. & L. R.*,

pamphlet, *The Insiders*. In the same way, we are as deeply concerned as our readers with the issue of the Hydrogen Bomb and of socialist foreign policy for Britain. The failure of the Left to sustain their case at Brighton was in part due to its failure to come to the Conference prepared with a blue-print showing how Britain might break with the whole NATO complex of diplomacy and strategy, and take the lead, with the tacit support of Poland and Yugoslavia and the active support of other Western labour movements, in initiating the formation of a group of mediating "Bandung" powers in Europe. Stalinist "Two Camps" dogmas on the one hand, and on the other hand the underlying commitment of most Labour politicians to the sanctity of the American alliance, has prevented the emergence of such an alternative policy for far too long. Now that most populated centres on the earth have been brought within an hour's range of extinction, we cannot allow principled policy to wait upon the tactical susceptibilities of politicians. If Mr. Bevan finds himself naked, we must make him some clothes and ask him, in the name of decency, to put them on.

If this number does not tackle, at a central point, either of these two problems, we can assure readers that we have work in preparation; and in the "Letter" addressed to them in the last pages of this number they will find suggestions as to how they can help it on. Meanwhile, the Russian "Sputnik" has twice circled the globe in less time than it has taken to write this editorial. In the face of such astonishing triumphs of science and technique, the mood grows within all of us which causes us to doubt the value of slow, effortful, dogged intellectual and creative work, with its appeal to only a few thousand people. Are we not all victims of events which stem, not from purposive human choices, democratically enforced, but from the rapid transformations of productive technique and the causes of political executives which prescribe their application? As socialists and humanists we must reject this mood. The annihilation of the threat of war, the taming of irresponsible power, the application of scientific triumphs to creative purposes, the construction of a society where human relationships are undistorted by mental tyranny or class oppression - these ends demand the co-operation of the techniques of scientist, artist, and economist, with the creative initiatives of the people. We make no apology, in such a time, for giving up so large a part of our space to the vision of William Blake and the thought of Karl Marx. We believe that this vision, this theory, influencing the minds and actions of living men and women, are among those human forces which - in the end - are the only forces which can keep the bombers grounded and which can make

the fruits of men's ingenuity into sources of human enrichment. We are not "above the battle," for where is the battlefield if it is not within the human reason and conscience? Of course the "battle" finds its expression in political and industrial forms, but it is still fought against those whom William Blake denounced in his own strange and forceful way - those "who would, if they could, for ever depress Mental & prolong Corporeal War."

Acknowledgments.

Our cover drawing of William Blake at Hampstead, by John Linnell, is reproduced by permission of the Syndics of the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge; and our further thanks and acknowledgments are due to the Trustees of the British Museum, and to Messrs. P. & D. Colnaghi, for permission to reproduce drawings and engravings by William Blake in their possession. Our particular thanks are due to the Editors of *The Studio* and of *The Architectural Review* for the loan of several of the blocks used in our supplement.