

## LETTER TO OUR READERS

After two numbers it is possible to say that **The New Reasoner** is firmly established, is winning new readers in Britain and overseas, and has a steadily rising circulation, now topping 2,000. Certainly we are getting around. Our readership is growing not only in Britain but also in the United States, South Africa, Canada, Australia, and we send copies to India and Japan, Russia and Tasmania.

Material from our first number has been reprinted in the United States and Poland, France and Australia. The theoretical journal of the Polish Workers' Party devoted a special article, welcoming and criticising our first number.

At home we have received a welcome from many socialists who do not accept our general approach: Kingsley Martin in the *New Statesman*, Peter Fryer in *The Newsletter*, Frank Horrabin in *Socialist Commentary*, and Tom Driberg in *Reynold's*. Our second number, with John Hughes' article on steel nationalisation, has attracted wide attention in the labour movement. "By far the best critical examination of steel nationalisation," said the *Railway Review*; "I urge every reader to get a copy," wrote Robert Millar, industrial correspondent of *Tribune*, in a special article. Ever since its appearance the British Iron and Steel Federation has been splashing money around in large-scale advertising in the socialist press. Is this just a coincidence?

A growing number of booksellers are now stocking us. In almost every case they have sold out their orders.

This pleases us and we hope it pleases readers too; because they have done a great deal to make this success possible by selling the journal, making donations, and sending in criticisms and ideas. Starting **The New Reasoner** was a risk. We thought 4/- might be too stiff. We had no capital, no office or secretarial help (which is why your letters, which are always welcome, cannot always be answered), no political organisation to distribute us, no popular daily newspaper nor American-sponsored "Congress for Culture Freedom" to back us. Apart from the actual printing, all services for the journal have been performed voluntarily and without payment.

We stand or fall by our readers' goodwill, both the old campaigners who fought alongside us in the duplicated days and the new readers who have found in us a first-rate laboratory of socialist ideas and writing. What do readers think of us?

Very few like everything we publish, but everyone likes something. Some like best the translations and documents Dery, Wazyk, Sartre, Infeld, Hikmet, Yashin; but they don't like the discussion. Some like the political theory but don't like the poetry. Some think

we are too "stuffy," too "arty," or too "difficult"; others would like a mainly cultural and theoretical journal.

But most readers are tolerant. They realise that we are a political **and** cultural journal, serving a wide variety of needs; that we are a journal that is growing **outwards**, and if we are to influence society we must discover and meet the needs of a far wider public than in the old days; and that we are a **quarterly**, which cannot "keep up with the news."

We want criticisms and suggestions. And we have plenty of fresh proposals ourselves. We want more constructive analysis of contemporary society and of policies for the Left, but this doesn't grow on trees. Material has to be planned in advance, criticised, discussed, revised. Here are some of our plans for future numbers:

**Foreign Policy and International Coverage.** We are at work on a comprehensive statement of a socialist foreign policy for Britain, and hope to publish some of this work in our next number. A series of letters describing the problems and alignments of the Left in different countries will commence in the same number. Letters are already planned from France, the United States, Germany, Canada and Australia. We still need international contacts (especially India and the Far East) and translators or monitors who can follow the foreign press (e.g. China, Yugoslavia). Can you help?

**Contemporary society.** We require more factual study, more analysis and more policy discussions on economic, industrial and colonial problems. If you have ideas on this, or can assist in the research, please let us know.

N.B. - Ken Alexander's article on "Worker's Control" is delayed once more: but it is still "forthcoming."

**Discussion.** Edward Thompson will be writing a follow-up on his first article on "Socialist Humanism," taking up the points of various critics. Meanwhile, we hope that discussion will develop around the articles of other contributors, for example, on the very wide range of problems opened up by John Saville's article in this number.

**Cultural & Scientific.** As old dogmas have toppled on the political Left, so a new unrest and uncertainty can be seen among younger writers and artists. A feature is in preparation ("Whom do you paint for?") introducing young artists to our readers. Historical features, including documents, are under discussion; we shall be publishing some poems of the late Montagu Slater, together with a tribute; and we are keeping an eye open for fresh creative writing satire, or humour.

If these plans are to be carried through we shall need **your** co-operation. Here are three urgent points:

\* CIRCULATION. Our print for this number goes up to 2,500. We shall sell this out, with your help, but to win security in the face of the rising cost of postage and new improvements, we need a circulation of over 3,000 - that is, more bookshop sales, and another 500 annual subscribers.

If you are a subscriber already, will you take out a SPECIAL GIFT SUBSCRIPTION for a Friend? **The New Reasoner** for a year would be Christmas or New Year present which many of your friends would value. We can't pare our costs below 15/- for one annual subscription, but we can offer two for 25/- or three for 33/-. With the first number sent to your friends we will enclose a greetings card in your name. (And should the friends selected already be subscribers we will inform you at once and refund your money).

\* DEVELOPMENT FUND. Our expenses and income just about balance, with fares and other expenses coming out of our own pockets. But to expand we must advertise, and travel to bookshops. Also, members of the editorial board would like to visit centres where our readers are, to meet them and learn their ideas. We are therefore opening a **special fund** for donations for these developments. We invite any readers who can afford it to send donations to **The New Reasoner**, Holly Bank, Whitegate, Halifax, Yorkshire.

\* STEEL PAMPHLET. In response to demand, John Hughes' article on **Steel Nationalisation and Political Power** has been reprinted in pamphlet form. The best reply that readers can give to the current advertising campaign of the British Iron and Steel Federation is to see that this pamphlet is circulated widely in the labour movement and in the factories. It is distributed by "Reasoner Pamphlets" and should be ordered direct from Pamela Silver, 8a Park Avenue, Hull, Yorkshire: single copies 9d. post free: twelve for 7/6d.: twenty for 12/6d.: terms for bulk on request.

Please help us in these three ways. Our subscription rates are to be found inside the front cover. Thank you.