

LETTER TO OUR READERS

This number brings us to the end of our first year of printed life. The last three months have been heavy going. Our Business Manager flitted from Sheffield to Aberdeen, taking with him our 'know-how' and a Pickford's van stuffed with notes on 'Worker's Control.' Fire broke out on the editorial premises. The editorial baby got hold of the postal orders and the editorial cat walked with wet feet on the cheques.

But here we are, circulation still rising, and our print goes up this time to 3,000. Favourable notices from Tom Driberg and John Wain have helped to get our name known; but results would be even better if readers would follow the publicity up, making personal approaches to their friends. Where this has been done, circulation has jumped at once, revealing a large reservoir of potential readers waiting to be introduced.

We are producing a special **leaflet** for this purpose. So, when sending us your sub or a donation, send us on any likely addresses. Better still, send for a dozen leaflets, and add your personal recommendation when sending them out.

This number, with its special foreign policy feature, is a good one to take around. Once again, our warm thanks to the small number of readers who have taken this initiative: taking bulk orders for sale, visiting bookshops, introducing friends.

Discussion.

This number is suited for discussion purposes. This ought, we feel, to take place, formally or informally, within the main stream of the movement, rather than in special 'Reasoner' groups apart from it. Material published in our pages has been used for discussion in trade union branches, Labour parties, the W.E.A., Tribune societies, C. P. branches, forums, the U. & L.R. Club; a special conference was organised by a Labour Party in the Sheffield area to discuss Steel Nationalisation, using John Hughes' pamphlet as a starting-point. In some places - or on special topics - there may be a case for special 'Reasoner' meetings. We have had a successful first meeting of Yorkshire contributors and supporters, and one is planned for Scotland: while one of the editors has met several groups of readers in London. If you have proposals for your own area, let us know.

International Contacts. These are rapidly extending, and personal discussions have been held with comrades from several countries, which we hope will bring more information and coverage for our readers. We want to hold the balance between international material and analysis of the British scene and British traditions, but readers should remember that one of the functions of the N.R. is as a clearing-house for information for socialists in many parts of the English-speaking world..

. Ties with America are being maintained. Joseph Starobin is booked to write in our next number. When John Williamson, in the British **Daily Worker** last January, made a bitter attack upon John Gates, the leader of the American Communist 'dissidents' who resigned when the New York D.W. was closed down, we wrote to Gates offering him the chance to reply. Unfortunately his answer came too late for our main text. But here are some of his points.

Williamson (he says) "uses the old tactic which has alienated so many people from Communist Parties - don't argue with opponents, dishonour them." He goes on to show the way in which Williamson's article was made up of snippets from articles, presented as Gates' views, but in fact snatched out of context and patched together to make it appear that he had turned his back on socialism.

In recent articles Gates has made it clear enough that this is false. "After being so certain, and dogmatic," (he writes) "on most of what I did for a quarter of a century, I am not inclined to make hastily decisions ... I want to do some listening, some reflecting, some study." He hopes to see a new American radicalism, linking together the labour movement and Negro people, and a new Left which cares both for political democracy and social justice. "The answer to the present splinters on the Left is not to form still another one."

It is difficult to see why the British **Daily Worker** should devote a main feature article to attacking a socialist with Gates' record, among the unemployed, in Spain, and in McCarthy's jails. Perhaps the best comment on Williamson's piece comes from another American reader: "He lives in a mental Comintern."

Future Plans. Sub-committees and advisory groups are being set up to cover East Europe and colonial affairs, and work has been started in several fields of economic and industrial research. In our next number we hope to announce some re-organisation and extension of our editorial board.

Addicts of the old **Rhyming Reasoner** will be glad to see that Mc Gonagall has joined our staff. Old hands in Fleet Street are still whistling at the transfer fee from the Elysian fields. Another member of our editorial board, Ronald L. Meek, has returned from a visit to the underworld - this time New Zealand and Japan - and an article on 'Marxism in Japan' appears in our next number. Also in our next number we expect to have a special feature on contemporary painting, prepared with the help of leading painters and critics; a new short story by Doris Lessing; creative writing from Poland and Hungary; discussion on 'positive neutrality' in which European socialists take part; Edward Thompson's response to critics and further comments on socialist humanism; material on the Jewish question, including letters of Gramsci, translated for the first time by Hamish Henderson; and - who knows? - that Pickford's van might even come back.

Announcements. If your annual subscription comes due this time, please renew it within the next three weeks, and save us the time and expense of sending reminders. Postage increases mean that our sub goes up to 16/-, but we are holding single copies at 4/-. Please don't forget we need donations: send 20/- instead of 16/- if you can manage. Also, send us a brief list of priorities: what you like, what you dislike, in the first year.

There is other help needed, (i) Can any readers type manuscripts for us? The quantity of typing involved will not be much, but the notice may be short, (ii) Is there any reader in West Yorks. (or even Manchester) with shorthand/typing who could occasionally spend an afternoon or evening at Halifax taking letters? (iii) We are slowly canvassing London bookshops but need help. Will London readers willing to visit and keep steady contact with two or three shops let us know, (iv) We have no agent to promote sales in Birmingham, Bristol, Oxford, Manchester: any offers?

Finally, two special announcements:

Ordeal. This pamphlet, by Mervyn Jones, describes the case of the Algerian girl, Djamilia Bouhired, now under sentence of death after a shameless mock-trial by the French authorities. Sale of the pamphlet is urgent. It is published by the Union of Democratic Control, in association with U. & L.R., the Movement for Colonial Freedom, and ourselves. Readers can order supplies direct from 'New Reasoner Pamphlets,' 152 Westbourne Avenue, Hull: price 6d. each post free, no reduction for bulk. Copies also from our editorial address if you are sending in a subscription. Supplies of John Hughes' pamphlet on Steel Nationalisation are still available, 9d. post free, twelve for 7/6.

Development Fund. We still run at a slight loss, with no money for advertising, travel, circulation drives. As circulation goes up, part-time paid secretarial help may become essential. A few readers have responded generously to our last appeal: but far too few. An extra £200 a year would lighten our whole work - that is, less than 2/- from each reader. But many readers can only just afford our subscription as it is, so will more prosperous readers please be generous?

THE NEW REASONER is a quarterly, published early in September, December, March and June. Subscription rates are 16s. yearly (4s. single copies) post free. United States: \$2.50 (airmail: '25). From THE NEW REASONER, Holly Bank, Whitegate, Halifax, Yorkshire. All manuscripts should be sent to the Editors at this address together with a stamped addressed-envelope. Copy for the Summer number by April 20th.