

LETTER TO OUR READERS

Readers sometimes ask us whether we can't reduce our price — perhaps to 2/6d, even if this means cutting down our pages. We appreciate their difficulties, but the fact is that we have to work hard to keep the price as low as it is..

(1) Journals of this kind cannot pay their own way in present conditions. Academic journals of comparable size and circulation sell at anything from 7/6d to 10/- per copy: cultural journals are usually subsidised and assisted (perhaps by some large publishing house) and even so, like the London Magazine, are under periodical threats of closure: political journals have a ready-made distributing organisation, are normally subsidised heavily, or run a fighting fund, or (like some C.P. journals) lean upon the indirect subsidy of large foreign orders.

(2) With reasonable printing costs, our own deficit on the first year amounts to over £250. This has been met in part by large donations from a few generous friends: in part by smaller donations of 4/- and upwards from our general readership: in part from our own pockets.

(3) With the improvements which we have introduced in format and art features (which have been very widely welcomed) our production costs have risen: and the increased postal rates on top of this mean that our estimated rock-bottom deficit (printing and postage on one side, and receipts on the other) will be £350 in 1958.

(4) This figure scarcely takes into account editorial running expenses: telephone: fares: special circularisation, etc. It allows us about one advert for each number, and it does not allow us to have any part-time paid secretarial help at all.

(5) (Reviewing the past year, it is obvious that we can't continue on a shoe-string like this. So instead of £350, we must set ourselves a minimum target of £500 to be raised in donations in the coming year.

We don't want to cut our size drastically. We already have a backlog of good material building up, and there are more and more demands on our space. So once again we must come to you for help:

(a) Thank you, all of you who renewed your subscriptions so promptly this time, and also those very many readers who included a donation with their sub. If any of you forgot, or couldn't afford, to add a donation, will you think it over again? And any wealthier readers — if we have any — please remember how much difference your generosity can make to us.

(b) If we could boost our sales to 5,000, many of our problems would be overcome. But there just is no way in which we can do this without your help. If you can order a couple of extra copies (sale or return) each time, or introduce the occasional new reader, this is the (best help you can give us.

(c) Don't be too apologetic about the 4/-. You might point out that contributors, editors, distributors, put in many hours of work to get the journal to you, for nothing: and the services they give you should be worth the price of 20 Players four times a year.

(d) When sending orders and donations, please put in a note with your criticisms, likes and dislikes, and ideas.

We are always delighted when something happens which rocks the political pundits, and which suggests that we are not all doomed to foe ground to dust by one bureaucracy or another. One of our best friends in Scotland was elected in May to the Fife County Council, as nominee of a small independent socialist propaganda society, the Fife Socialist League. The figures were: Lawrence Daly 1,085, Mrs. Blair (the sitting Labour Councillor) 525, J. Stewart (Communist Party) 197. Lawrence Daly has an exceptional personal standing, tooth in the pit and in the mining village of Ballingry where he stood; so we aren't drawing any conclusions, and we certainly aren't urging readers to form new parties or leagues. But questions of tactics and parties aside, it is heartening to see this response to an election address which includes the words: "(By voting for me, you can tell the local Communist Party exactly how you felt about Hungary; and you can tell the local Labour Party that it's time Labour 'Leaders' started leading!"



agreement with Trotskyism, (b) for rejecting an article by a member of "the Group."

So far as (b) goes, we do not hold ourselves under any obligation to explain publicly why we do or do not accept particular contributions. But since it is suggested that we are guilty of wholesale suppression of one particular viewpoint, we will on this occasion do so. First, we rejected, not a wheel-barrow full of learned manuscripts, but **one** discussion contribution by one man. Second, the manuscript in quest-

Our dour contemporary **Labour Review**, a Trotsky-journal (belonging to the same group which publishes Peter Fryer's Newsletter, is gravely disappointed in us: or, to be precise, in one of our editors, Comrade E. P. Thompson. In a long editorial attack, written in a prose-style distilled in some Petrograd cellar in 1905, and entitled "An Unreasonable Reasoner," we are taken to task (a) **for** expressing editorial dis-

ion was rejected, not because of its view point, but because it seemed to us poorly-argued, unconstructive and of little interest to our readers. Third, we do not approve of polemics which shelter behind pseudonyms. Finally, we may quote John Saville's opinion, in a letter of rejection, that "the tone of your comment was of the kind that has bedevilled the argumentation of the (Left for many decades," carrying "the implicit assumption that . . . he who deviates in this or that way is a traitor to the Good Old Cause . . . The heresy hunting implicit in this approach has helped to land us in the fragmentation that we see around us today."

Meanwhile readers will toe glad to learn that the masterpiece in question is not lost to the world, but will appear in the next Labour Review. We will continue our editorial practice of judging material submitted to us, not in terms of political origin, (but in terms of merit and interest to our readers.

In fairness it should be added that **Labour Review** is not always as fat-headed as this, and usually it carries one or more article of general interest. It is a bi-monthly, costing 2/-, and its business address is 266 Lavender Hill, London, **S.W.11**.



Nearly 50% of our readers are in London, but we find them most elusive. They don't (as a rule) respond to our requests for help in promoting sales or visiting bookshops, so that our sales promotion still depends upon the efforts of two or three very busy people. To get better two-way contact we are planning to hold monthly meetings of readers, at which contributors will discuss their articles, and where we can learn what readers think. The first meeting (in the ULR Club, 7 Carlisle Street) will not be until September; meanwhile, if any readers are willing to help organise this, please let us know. And if readers in any other centres wish to organise occasional meetings of the same sort, we'll do what we can to help.



With this number we welcome two new members onto our editorial board: **Alfred Dressier**, Lecturer in [Russian at Leeds University, is convenor of our East European Sub-Committee, and has helped us with advice and translations from our first number. **Peter Worsley**, soclot-

oglst, and author of "The Trumpet Shall Sound," has his third article in the present number. Among new contributors to the present number, Professor G. D. H. Cole needs no introduction. Dr. D. G. Arnott is author of "Our Nuclear Adventure -- The Possibilities and Perils." (Lawrence & Wishart, 11/6), has worked for some years to build Science for Peace, and is a leading speaker of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. Roddy Barry, disabled in a pit accident when doing his national service, still managed to take part in the Aldermaston March: is a member of the direct action committee which organised the recent Lobby. Claude Bourdet, a leader of the French Resistance, is editor of "Prance-Observateur" — widely regarded as the best-informed socialist weekly in Europe — and a prominent member of the recently formed Union of the French Left. Ralph Miliband is a Lecturer in Political Science at the London School of Economics. Peter Smith works as a technical executive in the engineering industry, is a past Chairman of the West Middlesex district committee of the C.P. and a present member of the Uxbridge Labour Party. Professor Jan Szczepanski became Professor of Sociology at the University of Lodz in 1945, and was Rector of Lodz University, 1952-56. He is now Director of the re-established Polish Sociological Institute (which was closed between 1949-56), and is co-editor of the "Sociological (Review)" (which resumed publication only in November, 1956).

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This number has turned out differently from our expectations, and several items which we promised you were not in for copy date. We had hoped to include some discussion of Professor Hyman Levy's study of '*Jews and the National Question'; and since the copy is not to hand, we are holding over until a later number the extracts on this question from Antonio Gramsci's letters. We are also holding over to our next number a symposium on the visual arts and the labour movement, with contributions from John Berger, Dr. Barnett Stross, M.P., Derek Greaves and Edward Middleditch. This will appear together with a second symposium -- "Searchlight on Labour" -- in which experts will discuss the perspectives, problems and structure of the Labour Party. A poem by Adam Wazyk, a short story -- "The Exile" — toy John St. John, and a review article on Schoyen's biography of Harney — and we look like toeing full up.

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Readers who are under 30, or thereabouts, are invited to a summer discussion camp on the Suffolk coast, organised toy the National Association of Labour Student Organisations, and jointly sponsored by the New Reasoner, Universities & Left Review, and various other bodies: date, September 12th to 19th: cost, £5: details from Ken Coates, 9 Waldeck Road, Oarrington, Nottingham -- and enclose a stamped addressed envelope. Members of our editorial board expect to be among the "backbencher, frontbenchers, academics, industrial workers, poets and playwrights" whom the organisers promise will be there.