

## Letter to our Readers

You have done us proud this quarter. In response to the Appeal published in our last number, and to a special Appeal organised from Hull, you have already sent to us more than £200 in donations, collections from readers, proceeds of jumble sales. Thank you once again for this splendid answer to our appeals.

How is the money spent? First, it goes a long way to covering our deficit on the second year of publication. Second, we have shown our gratitude in some extra pages and blocks in this number to cheer you over the Christmas break — if you get time to read them. Finally, we are lashing out with a big 'New Statesman' advert., since there is an iron law in this game -- your circulation either expands or you go under. Our circulation is expanding but not fast enough.

That still leaves us with plenty of needs. We still can't meet quite ordinary expenses, like some fares. We still have to think twice every time we order a block. We are miles away from being able to pay for the part-time secretarial help which every day becomes more necessary.

We mention this, in case there are any readers who have not yet responded to the 1958 Appeal, but who might be able to give us something in the New Year. Please don't think we can manage all right without it. Every penny we get will be put to work.

And a small apology. A few readers, who have already given us generous donations, may have received a special Appeal letter as well. Please don't think that this means that your original gift has been overlooked. It just means that we haven't yet got round to a proper cross-check of the card-index at Halifax and that at Hull.

All mail sent to our editorial address will be duly forwarded to the right place. But it does help us if special donations (unaccompanied by subscriptions) could be sent direct to our Appeal organiser: Mrs. Joan Welton, 52 Marlborough Avenue, Hull.

Subscriptions or donations, cheques and postal orders should be made out to THE NEW REASONER; and since from time to time mail does go astray, please inform us at once if your copy is overdue or if you have not received a receipt for a donation.

The affair of Pasternak and the Nobel Prize caught us at a late stage of preparation for the press. That may not be a bad thing. Three issues have been inextricably confused in all the hullabaloo. First, the Cold War politics (East and West) which have developed around the book. Second, the rights of publication, open discussion and enquiry, highlighted once more by the Soviet censorship. Third — and a long way third in most discussions — the literary merits of the book.

We invited Iris Murdoch, the distinguished novelist, to give her opinion on the third question, which she has done most lucidly in these pages. On the second issue, we would say that certain of the questions

posed by the editors of 'Novy Mir' In their letter to Pasternak (translated and published here by 'Soviet News ') seem to us questions of interest, and material for fruitful controversy. What is contemptible is the publication of this letter (together with official vilifications, editorial damnations, and (in Britain) Dr. Kettle's casuistical letters to the 'Manchester Guardian ') when Pasternak and his Soviet admirers are unable to reply, and the Soviet public is unable to form its own judgment on the book. Once again, the Communist Establishment (in Russia and in Britain) reveals that appalling "patriarchal " attitude towards " the masses " which Pasternak criticises in 'Zhivago ' — its utter contempt for the judgments of ordinary people, its fear of democratic processes.

As for Pasternak's own feelings when caught in this Cold War vortex — we suggest that readers look up the ' Impressions of Boris Paternak ' published in our fourth number. The author describes a public reading of Pasternak's poems, and records: " When someone raised the cry ' Sixty-sixth sonnet,' others took it up until it seemed the whole audience was chanting ' Shidisyat shistoi sonet!' And Pasternak 'obliged' with his superb translation of Shakespeare's 'Tired with all these for restful death I cry . . . ' "

Here is the whole sonnet, which might serve as a commentary on the affair:

Tired with all these, for restful death I cry,—  
As, to behold Desert a beggar born,  
And needy Nothing trimm'd in jollity,  
And purest Faith unhappily forsworn,  
And gilded Honour shamefully misplaced,  
And maiden Virtue rudely strumpeted,  
And right Perfection wrongfully disgraced,  
And Strength by limping Sway disabled,  
And Art made tongue-tied by Authority,  
And Folly, doctor-like, controlling Skill,  
And simple Truth miscall'd Simplicity,  
And captive Good attending captain III:

Tired with all these, from these I would be gone,  
Save that, to die, I leave my love alone.

'Dr. Zhivago' may be the subject of the January London readers' meeting — we don't have the final details arranged yet, and a meeting on the Yugoslav Draft Programme is also projected. To remind you, these meetings are held at 7-45 p.m. on the second Friday of every **month**, in the Partisan Coffee House, 7 Carlisle Street -- off Soho Square. The first two meetings with D. G. Arnott, Mervyn Jones and Ralph Miliband, were successful: the December meeting will be introduced by Peter Worsley: subject, 'A Critique of Conviction.' So please make a regular date of this, and book it in your diary.

Other discussion centres seem to be growing up apace — we hear from readers in Fife and Colchester, Brighton and Sheffield. In Leeds a Left Club will be meeting regularly after Christmas, promoted by N.R. and U.L.R. readers; another is projected for Manchester and district. In the London School of Economics our readers have taken an active part in promoting public lectures, under the auspices of the 'Harold Laski Forum'; lecturers have included Christopher Hill, Norman Birnbaum, Brian Abel-Smith, Charles Taylor; and there has been a most encouraging response from the large audiences. Other Universities please copy.

These encouraging developments were among the questions discussed at a Conference at Wortley Hall, Sheffield, in October. It was attended by the editorial boards of this journal and of U.L.R., together with contributors to both journals and some readers (mainly from the North). It was one of the most stimulating Conferences we have attended, and the 'New Left' really seemed to be taking shape. The following are among the more important decisions taken:

(1) We are trying to co-ordinate the business of promoting lectures, educational and discussion activities, etc., wherever there is a firm basis for it, both in the North and South.

(2) Three or four week-end schools are planned for next summer. Among those under discussion are, (a) a school on industrial problems intended for active trade unionists, (b) one on science and socialism, where scientists and non-scientists will try to find out what is hindering their more fruitful co-operation, and (c) one on Marxism and Philosophy. Readers interested in any of these should let us know. Also, while there is obviously a tremendous field opening up for conference and educational work, we are already so short-staffed that we don't know how we are going to take the extra load; here is a real field for initiative for people with an organising or secretarial bent, especially from London or Yorkshire/Lancashire.

(3) There is some hope of a Library of socialist books commencing publication in 1959, with a selection board nominated by U.L.R. and N.R. and in association with a commercial publisher.

(4) Both editorial boards are meeting again in December to discuss in detail the possibility of a merger, with a united journal appearing perhaps six times a year. Nothing has been finally settled, and we would like readers' views. On the one hand, the audiences of the two journals are somewhat different, and they have performed different functions during the past two years. On the other hand, much might be gained if editors, contributors and readers could pool their energies in a single effort, building auxiliary research, educational and propagandist activities around one regular bi-monthly.

Whatever the decision on this, we hope all readers will give maximum support to our first major joint venture: the publication of *Wages Policy* by Ken Alexander and John Hughes in January. This 30,000 word booklet probes deeply into the history of wages struggles since the war, and outlines a socialist policy linking wages, prices and investment policy. It combines original ideas, detailed tables, and a hard grasp of essential socialist economic theory. In addition to ordering your own copies early in January, readers are asked to order extra copies on sale or return; and to organise sales and discussions among trade unionists and socialists.

Among new contributors to this number, John Marshall, Tom **Mboya** and J. T. **Murphy** are introduced in the text. Ken Alexander, a member of our editorial board, lectures at Aberdeen University and researches on Workers' Control: Peter Barnes has been a film critic and story editor and is now a free-lance scriptwriter: V. G. Kiernan lectures in Modern History at Edinburgh University: Alasdair MacIntyre lectures in Philosophy at Leeds University, his most recent book is a study of the concept of the unconscious in contemporary psychology: **Iris Murdoch**, philosopher and novelist, her most recent novels, 'The Sandcastle' and 'The Bell': Herbert Smith, novelist and industrial worker, author of 'A Field Full of Folk.'

Who is this Worsley whose meteoric rise in the past two years to the Top Reasoner Triumvirate has astonished Western observers? Two years ago he was a humble Minister for Cargos in the Melanesian region, and at the time of N.R.I was a candidate-member of the editorial Orgbureau. His admission to full membership of the Orgbureau (N.R.5) was generally taken to be a recognition of his services as Hatchet-man during the Purge of Schweitzer (N.R.3). Interpreters construed this as a strengthening of John ("Stonebreaker") Savilie and the Old Marxist Fraction as against the Petty-Humanist Fiction of the Thompsonite Divisionists. But, significantly, one of Worsley's books was noticed in 'Labour Review.' Never seen out alone (he is always accompanied by a sheathed umbrella) he is believed to be quietly replacing contributors in the apparatus with his own men; Savilie is rumoured to be titular editor only and may shortly be appointed Ambassador to Withernsea; and a secret session of the editorial Orgbureau has been called for next month at which it is expected that Worsley will make dramatic revelations as to Thompson's perstained and hyperstrophic verbal misaggregations.