

Letter to our Readers

We were two days off publication, with the sheets already through the press, when the printing lock-out held us up. It has been a long delay, and we regret that some of our material -- on the Campaign and on Central Africa -- has been overtaken by events. But it would have delayed us still further if we had allowed our contributors to bring their articles up-to-date. So here we are. If possible, our next number will appear in October instead of September. It will be our last number in this form, and will include full details of the New Left Review which will take over and continue our work.

Please remember that the settlement in the printing industry is bound to lead to increased costs (and we have lost money owing to this long delay), so that donations (to our editorial address) are more needed than ever.

Readers will be saddened to learn that in the interval between writing and publication, Dr. Don Arnott has been seriously ill with polio. They will understand how much his advice has been missed at recent editorial meetings, and join us in wishing him a steady recovery. We also regret to announce that Professor Blyumin, the subject of Ronald Meek's article in this number, has died while we have been awaiting publication.

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Since our last report to readers, further discussions have taken place between the Editorial Board of this journal and that of Universities and Left Review concerning the proposed publication of a new journal which would replace both the existing ones. At these meetings, the political character of the new journal, the tasks it should set itself, the problem of integrating the differing traditions of the existing journals without sacrificing the particular merits of each, in short, the whole general image of what the new journal should stand for, what it will cover and what it will look like, were carefully discussed.

Underpinning this discussion of character and policy is the work of a hard-headed (not to say hard-faced) Ways and Means Committee, which is working out costs, production schedules, size, format, and the thousand and one financial and administrative issues that have to be foreseen and not merely blundered into.

Out of these discussions is emerging the image of a new (and we think, exciting) journal, not merely a contrived amalgam of the existing journals, which will be capable of responding much more fully to the pressing demands of the situation, and, in particular, of establishing contact with the new and quite untraditional publics which are emerging. Our Editorial in this issue indicates the kind of activities which will be associated with such a journal, some of which we have already begun to develop in a modest way, through co-operation between the existing journals, but which need rapidly expanding in a much more ambitious fashion -- Left Clubs, conferences, publications, campaigns, etc.

Further meetings are to take place shortly, when more precise organizational decisions will be taken, and the various specific responsibilities for an appropriate division of labour established. This will involve not merely such matters as the composition of the new Editorial Board, but also developing ways of associating our readers with the work of the new journal and involving them in it. You're going to be busy -- if you want to be.

Since our last Letter encouraging developments have taken place in Leeds, Manchester and Edinburgh. The West Riding Left Club (meeting in Leeds) continues to have lively and well-attended meetings: West Yorkshire readers, if not yet members, should write to the Secretary, Dr. John Rex, at the Department of Social Studies, Leeds University.

At Manchester the Left Club, formed less than three months ago, has got off to a fine start. Attracting audiences of 100 and upwards, the majority in the under 25 age-group, it has already become part of the Manchester scene. NR and ULR readers Ken Bloor (Chairman), Paul Rose (Secretary), and Bob Alston (Treasurer) made the running together with Brian Holland, the Organising Secretary, whose address is: 'Massey Hall,' Thelwall, Nr. Warrington, Lanes.

At the same time an independent group of sponsors in Manchester have gone well ahead with plans for opening a Left-Wing Coffee House, as an open meeting-and-eating-place for Manchester's Left. The Left Club has been invited to make use of the facilities of the Coffee House when it opens in a few month's time, and the partnership should do good to both sides.

From Edinburgh we have had less news, but we believe a Left Club is finding its feet — perhaps someone will write to us one day. And we hear plans for the autumn from places as various as Sheffield and Tunbridge Wells, Birmingham and Middlesbrough. We don't have much time to help organise this new development, but if readers see chances of pushing out a Club in their own town next autumn, will they write to us or to ULR, and we'll give what advice we can.

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At Wortley Hall, near Sheffield, on April 18th-19th our first industrial conference attracted over 30 trade unionists and nearly a dozen economists and other professional workers. The trade unionists all held important shop, branch, district or national positions in their unions and included a large contingent of miners and of engineers and electricians as well as members of a dozen other unions. Theme of the conference was the advance of the British working class towards Socialism.

The keynote for the conference discussions was given by Ken Alexander as the search for correct reformist tactics in the present situation but leading to and embraced within a general revolutionary strategy. This was the key to understanding the Socialist Wages Plan which he and John Hughes had presented. The plan was not on the political agenda except as part of a major advance to social control over the economy.

Within this general framework there were lively discussions on achieving working class unity, overcoming trade union divisions, on establishing priorities among trade union demands for wages, for the 40-hour week, for equal pay for women, for what have come to be called 'fringe benefits' — job security provisions, supplements to insurance for sick pay and pensions, etc. — on the demand for work in depressed areas, on the problem of youth employment and on the whole larger question of the extension of the state sector and of workers' control within it.

It was made clear that trade unionists today are increasingly interested in political demands, in the possibilities of obtaining greater protection of their members by legislation. At the same time, the dangers as well as the opportunities arising from the greater involvement of trade unionists in the state apparatus were fully recognised. There was universal agreement on the need for the nationalised industries and the state sector generally to be made not only more efficient but more socialist and much less the servant of the private sector.

No formal resolutions or conclusions were reached and no organisation was set up; but plans were discussed for more similar conferences and for conferences in particular industries and generally for more socialist education. The conference showed the great advance that has been made in the last few years towards unity, and especially towards trade union -intellectual unity, in the New Left.

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If any outlying readers (or friends of readers) are still waiting for their copy of ULR 6, they should write at once to Janet Hase, Business Manager ULR, 7 Carlisle Street, London, W.I., with information about their subscription and when it is due to run out.

As most of our readers will already know, ULR office was burgled in May and all files stolen. Many subscribers have written in, but there are still a number outstanding.

Whodunit? We don't know any more than you, or any more than



the bloodhounds who keep on following up false scents.

The New Left discussion pamphlet -- A Socialist Wages **Plan** — by Ken Alexander and John Hughes has been in such demand that we had to run off a second print. We hope to carry a discussion feature around it in our next number. Copies are still available, at 2s. 3d. (post free) from: Mrs. Joan Welton, 52 Marlborough Avenue, Hull.

Most of the contributors to this number are already known to you. A. H. **Hanson**, who is Reader in Public Administration at Leeds University, has recently published a major study "Public Enterprise and Economic Development" (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 42s.). **Roddy Barry**, who was injured in a Yorkshire pit when working as a 'Bevin Boy,' works now for the National Coal Board: this is one of his first short stories; **David Boss**, whose study of De Gaulle's coup we published in NR 5, works for the 'Daily Herald' and is a contributor to 'Tribune,' 'France-Observateur,' etc.

Among new contributors, **Martin** Baillie teaches Art for the Glasgow University Department of Extra-Mural Studies, and **Richard Pear** lectures in Political Science at the London School of Economics. F. Le **Gros Clark**, the distinguished authority on population problems, was part author and editor (with N. W. Pirie) of 'Four Thousand Million Mouths,' and author of 'Feeding the Human Family,' 'Ageing in Industry' and 'Age and the Working Lives of Men.'

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Too much is being made by political commentators of the unexpected inclusion of Dorothy and Edward Thompson in Transport House's most recent list of Birthday Honours. According to one Fleet Street source, the whole story is a hoax originating in King Street -- a typical smear-campaign to discredit the New Left. Another story runs that it was the nominees of **Labour Review** on the National Executive who vetoed the Thompson's application, in revenge for a portrait of their editor which we once inserted (N.R. 5, p. 130). When we sent a reporter to Transport House both these stories were discounted. "We just goes down the line and knocks 'em all cold," an official spokesman said (referring to the Labour Party's new recruiting policy): "No, nothing personal. No, no politics about -- what's in that stuff? It's fair shares for all. Some we do in the eye, some we do on the nose, some we let in so we can give 'em the boot." He fingered a flick-knife and eyed our reporter: "What are they narking about, mister? They seen how we done the others. They was looking for it, wasn't they? The way some of 'em come nosing round here you'd think they'd been invited to a bloody party . . ."