

Letter to our Readers

On Monday, December 14th, at a public meeting in St. Pancras Town Hall, the 'New Left Review' will be launched. There will be a bran-tub full of speakers; we can't be sure what you will draw, but probably Stuart Hall, the Editor of NLR; John Saville, Chairman of the new NLR editorial board; and one or two of the following: John Braine, Michael Foot, Lawrence Daly, Edward Thompson, and a fraternal delegate from France.

It will cost 2s. 6d. to get in, and once you are in you will not be allowed out until Mervyn Jones has emptied your pockets.

Those who are mean enough to come without money will be locked in the Town Hall crypt until they have signed I.O.U.s.

Any London readers who think that they will be clever by simply not coming will be punished by having their names forwarded to Mr. Gerry Healy for his mailing and visiting list.

Non-attendance will be taken, anyway, as clear evidence of pre-meditated factional activity. A dossier of all such people will be prepared, together with tables on their kinship and sinship groups (not to mention peer-groups, beer-groups, and queer-groups), which will be circulated throughout the labour movement under the title of "The Offsiders: or Britain's Shower Elite."

As an ultimate punishment, non-attenders will be set to canvass Chislehurst with a detailed questionnaire designed to lay bare the truth as to why Chislehurst electors are, on balance, as yet unwilling to accept the expropriation of the expropriators.

It will be simplest, after all, to decide to come. We look forward to seeing you all — London and Home Counties readers — at St. Pancras Town Hall on December 14th.

* * *

The New Left Review will be more than a journal, but not quite a movement. As a journal, it will of course replace both the 'New Reasoner' and 'Universities & Left Review.' It will come out every two months (the first number, we hope, before Christmas). It will have - at last -- a full-time Editor, in Stuart Hall. It will draw upon the combined resources, goodwill and illwill, of both journals. And the two editorial boards now merge, with the addition of John Rex, Dorothy Thompson, and Raymond Williams.

This large editorial board is needed, not just to get under the Editor's feet, but to push off and co-ordinate a score of related activities which are helping to make the 'New Left' movement a reality: pamphlets, educational and conference work, books, international contacts, industrial conferences.

But while this board should be able to provide some of these services, the centres of activity will be in the Left Clubs. And the Left Clubs will also, through a co-ordinating committee, have their own independent role in promoting conference and educational work; and in influencing the general work of the Board.

Letter to Our Readers

129

As we see it, the two things will go together. The New Left Review will stimulate a Left Club movement throughout Britain; but in each centre the Club members, by democratic procedures, will work out the right kind of meetings and activities for their own conditions.

This is one place where our readers can immediately take action. Either by becoming an active member of your nearest Club, or by assisting in the formation of a Club or discussion group in your own area. For the next few months we hope that your letters to the office of the new journal will not commence: "Why don't you . . . ?" but will take the form: "We propose to do A, B and C in our own area . . . Can you help?"

We are pitching you into the sea, and we hope you'll find your own way to swim. We have the manifold technical, administrative and editorial problems of the new journal. But you have the experience necessary to take our ideas to a new and receptive public. Is there a case for a locally-based Left Club in your part of London? You are the best person to decide -- make your plans, but please consult the central London New Left Club before you go ahead. Have you some ideas for a new approach to trade unionists? A factory or pit-head canteen discussion group? A shot at a new-style socialist youth club, related to the labour movement but not under the thumb of Transport House?

Of one thing we're certain. The situation is ripe for you to move. On another page you'll find a list of Left Clubs: we've had to revise this list twice in copy and proof, as information about new Clubs has come in. We hope to revise it a lot of times in 1960.

There are many other things you can do to help. If we are to succeed, the circulation of New Left Review must exceed the combined circulation of the two previous journals. We can't afford a large advertising campaign. Can you do the advertising for us? Talk about us. Take out a gift subscription for a friend. Ask your Labour Party to take out a subscription, and have the NLR on display in the Labour rooms.

Subscribers to the New Reasoner whose subscription has not yet run out, will automatically receive one or more numbers of NLR (or the option of money back) and you will have each received an individual letter explaining the position. If your subscription has run out, please subscribe direct to the NLR on the brochure inserted in this copy. If you obtain your copy through a bookseller or wholesaler, please ask him to transfer your order to the new review. And, if you can think of friends or organisations to whom to hand them on, write for some extra brochures to the office of NLR.

If by any chance the brochure has fallen out of your copy, or you have mislaid it, the terms are as follows: 20s. annual subscription (6 copies) p re-publication price: after December 14th, 21s. to the Busi-

ness Manager, New Left Review, 7 Carlisle Street, London, W.I. And donations to the same address.

* * *

Donations. The entire 'New Left' operation depends upon our raising a sum, in banker's orders and donations of £2,000 in the first year. Remember, we have merged our annual running deficits as well as our editorial boards. We have salaries (even if meagre ones) to meet. If the office is to function efficiently it must have the minimum of equipment — at least a duplicator, an addressograph, and an electric fire.

You'll agree that our publications should not be in the pocket of any wealthy backer, organisation, or publishing-house. The editorial board has also decided that if any offers of revenue from advertisements for I.C.I., the steel companies, the Banks and that lot come our way, it will be refused. The money we get must come from socialist sources: and that means it must come from readers.

With the brochure you'll find an Appeal for donations, supported by a number of prominent people in the labour movement and in the professions. To those who have bank accounts we make a particular appeal for banker's orders, if possible on a monthly basis: £1, 10s. or 5s. per month. In this way you Help us on H.P. -- and we get a regular month-by-month income which makes all budgeting easier.

Will you consider this - as a kind of Socialist Tax, to keep alive and expanding an independent socialist press, free from advertising pressures and take-over bids?

For those who do not have bank accounts, and who can't afford donations, there is one particular way in which you can help our Appeal. A letter will shortly go out to selected trade unions and other organisations asking for their help. Write to the office and ensure that friendly organisations in your area receive copies; and be there to speak in favour of NLR when the letter is read.

* * *

On the pamphlet front: did you see the New Left pre-election pamphlet, 'Who are the Tories?', by Michael Barratt-Brown? This excellent and straightforward pamphlet, complete with peer-group tables, sketches in our interlocking financial, industrial and political power elite in popular style. A good pamphlet to introduce to people who find some of our other publications hard-going. The price is 1s. (1s. 3d. post free) or 10s. a dozen, from Mrs. Joan Welton, 52 Marlborough Avenue, Hull.

And another pamphlet which we were delighted to receive un-announced, through the post: 'Labour and the Youth Sections' — which has been written and produced by members of the Manchester Left Club. This is exactly the kind of initiative that makes us certain the New Left is a movement, here to stay. It's only 12 pages: but the 12 pages are terse and very much to the point — even more to the point, now that Transport House is bringing forward its own creaky proposals to dish the New Left. We understand it has been discussed by

members of London youth sections and they find that what Manchester says applies in the provincial backwaters of London as well. So whether you live in a Northern metropolis or down in the Middlesex provinces, order some copies now at 6d. each, from 73 Downham Crescent, Prestwich, Lanes.

Finally: Ron Meek's three articles have aroused so much favourable comment that we propose re-issuing them (perhaps with comments from other socialist economists) in booklet form some time in 1960. It will be several months yet — but a text for economic discussions which we hope you'll be able to use.

And industrial news. Two important items — first, a monthly duplicated industrial bulletin really is on the way. It will contain information and comment upon books, pamphlets, articles, of importance to trade unionists: short and sharp discussion on key industrial problems -- a place where our numerous but very scattered readers in industry can exchange ideas. Even before we start we need your help in getting sales agents in the factories and pits and trades councils. Please write without any delay to Jim Roche, 23 Rochester Terrace, Leeds, 6.

Second, a London and Home Counties conference on industrial problems of concern to socialists is planned for January 9th in the Friends House, Euston Road: New Left Review is co-operating with Tribune on this, and Clive Jenkins of Victory for Socialism is one of the speakers: among the topics under discussion, the campaign for the 40-hour week and problems of redundancy. Please write for full details direct to Cyril Holloway, 51 Comyn Road, London, S.W.11.

We understand there are many other plans—too many for us to keep up with. The West Riding Left Club plans a conference at the start of the New Year on Socialism and Nationalisation, at which it is hoped that trade unionists, left clubbers, Labour constituency workers, and students will get together. Scotland has plans for an industrial conference: we're not sure when or where. The London New Left Club has already started a series of discussion meetings on problems of the socialist youth movement: write direct to Sheila Benson, 7 Carlisle Street, London, W.I, for information. And we learn that NALSO, the student labour organisation, has plans for a four-day Conference at Swanwick in Derbyshire at which 'New Left' speakers will be well represented.

The thing is moving, you see. The need, the people, the mood, is there. Our problems, again and again, are those of organisation. We need more and more people taking on responsible positions of initiative. And, if we are to have efficiency at the centre, then we must first have more money. So, once again, can we ask you to regard two actions as being urgent: first, connect up with the Left Club movement yourself: second, help our Appeal, and if you can afford it, sign up a banker's order form for a regular monthly donation. How can we organise

effectively, or reply to you promptly, if we do not have a duplicator, some clerical help, money for fares? You cannot mount a socialist campaign with the revenue of an unsuccessful small town tobacconist's shop.

Or would you like us to put the movement into the pocket of Robbem's Press, the spry and forward-looking purveyors of mass stultification, who would run us as a subsidiary of Woman's Moan and the Daily Aggress?

And next time you hear someone deploring the influence of the mass media, shake him warmly by one hand, put a brochure into the other, and ask him what he is paying in Socialist Tax.

* * *

Two new journals to welcome. The first, 'Studies in the Left,' is being pushed out from a group of students in the Wisconsin Socialist Club. It is planned to do some of the things we have done in Britain, in the different circumstances of the U.S.A. There is plenty of good pacifist and anti-State sentiment among America's younger generation; much intellectual and cultural vitality; and, in pockets here and there, much hard socialist thinking. But the streams haven't yet run together — or so it seems from over here. So good luck to 'Studies in the Left,' which will cost one dollar fifty for three issues a year, and can be obtained from P.O. Box 2121, Madison 5, Wisconsin.

We like to help our provincial brothers. However, the second journal comes from the socialist metropolis (Leeds). This one is called 'Stand,' and there is an advert on page 55. Edited by the poet Jon Silkin, it is a journal of creative writing in the main. We need it. During our two and a half years we've had to send back to contributors a number of poems and sketches which didn't find space here because they didn't meet our central interests. New Left Review will continue to publish poems and short stories, but if Britain is waking up it will need far more space than we can provide for creative experiment and expression. We have got an NLR spy on the editorial board of 'Stand' in John Rex. It will be his job to intercept all the best stuff and send it on to us.

Now to wind up. First, back numbers. If your set is incomplete, we can plug the gaps: we can send any copies from Number 3 to Number 10, cost 4s. each post free: from our old address, Holly Bank, Whitegate, Halifax. Numbers 1 and 2 are not available separately; but we are binding a limited number of complete sets. It will be in two volumes (1 to 5, and 6 to 10) and each volume will cost one guinea; two guineas the complete file. While we cannot promise delivery for a couple of months, send in your order at once to ensure that you are at the top of the queue. If anyone has unwanted copies of 1 and 2, we would like them back; and will exchange copies of any other number for these.

Next, and most important, our thanks. To our readers, for sticking with us, writing to us, helping us in a hundred ways. To all those who

have sent us those donations without which we could not have continued. To our contributors, who have supplied us with so much material, often at short notice, always without payment, sometimes submitting to editorial interference of various kinds. To those who have advised us on special problems, and dug up information. To our long-suffering editorial board, who have always been ready to help, who have had to put up with more than one last-minute crisis, and who have sometimes been consulted less on matters of importance than they had the right to expect.

It is something, these days, for a socialist journal to exist for nearly three years and to emerge with an editorial board considerably stronger and more representative at the end than at the start; and with none of its members expelled, estranged, or in hiding.

We would like to single out two people for particular thanks. Don Arnott, whose scientific advice and campaign ammunition has been invaluable to us, is now making a slow, tenacious recovery from a very severe bout of polio. In a letter to New Left Review he says he hopes to be fit enough to come to the St. Pancras meeting -- "on my sticks." The kind of spirit which Don has shown in the last few months is the real reason why, despite the powers against us, we are confident of the future. It is a spirit which neither Odhams nor ITV will ever be able to buy.

Paul Hogarth, also, deserves a special note of thanks. It would not be fair to say that Paul has been our artistic and lay-out adviser throughout. The distance between Yorkshire and Essex has been too great: too many of his ideas have not been carried out, and too often we have had to reject his advice for technical or financial reasons which he could not foresee. The best way to put it is that where we have succeeded, it has been because Paul has shown us how to do it. And he can't be blamed for our failures. We only wish we had had the resources to repeat the success of the 12-page William Blake supplement in Number 3, which Paul designed in collaboration with Randan Swinger. One day we hope the New Left Review will have the means to lash out in the same way.

The list of those who have helped us could continue for pages. But we must content ourselves with thanking the most important group of all — those who have carried the business organisation and financial responsibility of the journal. From London it may seem that "Yorkshire" is a compact organisational centre. In fact, it's the biggest county in England, and running a journal from Halifax and Hull is about the same as running one from Hampstead and Southampton. Our admin staff has been dotted about the county — Shipley, Spen Valley, Leeds. Joan Knott has dealt with foreign subs from a point to the far North, Sheila Worsley with orders for single copies, and Jean Welton with banker's orders and guarantees from the far East. Bulk orders have gone out from Dorothy Greenald at Liversedge. At Halifax and at Hull we have tried to centralise the de-centralisation.

When the speeches and perorations are made, there is always "one man without whom . . ." In this case, there really is. Joe Greenald, our Treasurer, has been from first to last responsible for the fact that this is one of the first socialist periodicals on record, unbacked by any capital, which ends its existence free from debts. (That is, we shall be free from debts if all sellers and bookshops pay up for this number as promptly as they have responded to Joe's invoices in the past). Moreover, Joe's half-yearly balance sheets have provided our [Board with a continual guide to sales response and all costing problems. Late at night, often after a spell of overtime, Joe has sat at his typewriter doing the kind of job for which a professional accountant would expect a considerable salary. Perhaps his job has been of more political importance to the New Left than that of any other member of our team, including Editors.

* * *

Two other groups to thank, and then the thanks are done. First, the small (too small) group of readers who have acted as sales agents — Cambridge, Edinburgh, Leicester, Cardiff, Glasgow, London, West Fife, Leeds and other centres. We wish that there had been more of you. But this only makes our gratitude to those who have done this throughout, with efficiency and often to their own personal financial loss, the more. We very much hope that more readers will order and sell extra copies of New Left Review.

And, finally, thanks to our printers, Messrs. Fawcett, Greenwood & Co. of Halifax. Relations between us have always been good. And the printers have sometimes been "mucked about" a bit, especially these last two numbers. Quite often the editor's office has moved into the compositor's room, and we have sorted out the problems together "on the stone." We're sorry to be losing the connection; but glad to know that it will continue through the pamphlets side, and that Jon Silkin's 'Stand' will probably be printed here.

* * *

Well, there it is. Your queries? Yes, we did get buried in the work from time to time, so that we were producing a journal so hard that we had no time to think or write for it. Ken Alexander's 'Worker's Control' got lost on the way; it is rumoured for Number 3 of the New Left Review. John Saville and Edward Thompson failed to write out their second instalments — on the Welfare State and on 'Agency and Choice' respectively. An article planned by Dorothy Thompson on the Position of Women never happened, because her position was so much down under all the business organisation. If Ralph Miliband predicted a 'long haul,' we feel we have had one already. When we held the first discussions which led to the New Reasoner — on a platform at King's Cross, at Sheffield, Halifax, and Hull — we did not foresee all it would involve. The editorial baby, whose birth was synchronised with the suspension of John Saville and Edward Thompson from the Communist Party (same day, same hour?), and who was old enough to eat cheques

when the first number appeared, had her third birthday last week. She is now old enough to take all the cards out of the card-index and arrange them into pretty patterns, with her dolls playing at New Reasoner. It seems a pity to destroy this creative play-outlet ("Dare the New Reasoner leave Baby?"); but when the cards go to London, perhaps she will be satisfied with a pack of Happy Families instead? As we look back — and look around at the growing activities and Left Clubs — we think it was worth it: Just. But the proof will toe in the next two years; and in what all of us (and that includes our readers) can make of the movement around the New Left Review.

Councillor Lawrence Daly has asked us to express his very warm thanks — and the thanks of the members of the Fife Socialist League — to all those readers who sent donations to his election fund. John Saville and Edward Thompson, who sent out a circular letter to some readers, wish to add their personal thanks. About £60 is still outstanding, in loans to cover election expenses; and if any readers intended to send on that 10s. but never got around to it, it is not too late to send it to Lawrence, at 145 Kirkland Gardens, Ballingry, Fife.

We are glad to welcome new contributors to this number. Conrad Bollinger, a graduate of Victoria University, was the foundation secretary of the Wellington Socialist Forum. Edwin Brooks, a Birkenhead Labour councillor, teaches geography at Liverpool University. Malcolm Caldwell researches in the economic history of S.E. Asia at the School of Oriental and African Studies. Peter Cadogan, a Cambridge school teacher, has achieved the unique distinction of expulsion from the Communist Party, the Labour Party, and the Socialist Labour League. R. W. Davies lectures in Soviet studies at Birmingham University, and is author of a recently-published study of the Soviet budgetary system. Alison Bavetz studied at the Institute of Archaeology when V. G. Childe was Director; she now teaches pre-history extramurally and researches at Leeds University. The Right Honourable John Strachey, M.P., is a former War Minister and author of 'Contemporary Capitalism.' John Strachey was the author of 'The Coming Struggle for Power.'