

Our First Anniversary

This issue marks the beginning of the second year of the publishing of LEFT AND RIGHT. If the Nation can celebrate its centennial and National Review its tenth year of existence, we may be permitted a modest celebration of our own first anniversary. In a sense, our own longevity is already more remarkable than theirs. We began as an act of faith, a leap in the dark, unblessed then or now by the largesse of Boston Brahmins, oil millionaires, advertising by the military-industrial complex, or indeed by any donations whatever. So far we have been able to bear this condition without complaint, and without sending periodic pleas and exhortations for funds to our subscribers. But not only have we always existed on a shoestring; we did not begin, as did the other publications, as full-blown representatives of a flourishing popular and intellectual movement. We began with no eager army of laissez-faire liberal readers, as did the Nation, or of embattled Conservatives, as did National Review. In fact the main reason for our birth was a conviction by our editors and a tiny handful of colleagues that it was not possible that we could be the only people in the country with our particular political and ideological position. Hence our launching as a leap in the dark, as an almost desperate search for people who agree or might come to agree, in whole or in significant part, with our ideological outlook. LEFT AND RIGHT began, not in answer to the clamor of an eagerly receptive market of readers, but in a fervent search for a market that should be there, but which seemed to be non-existent. In particular, we hoped to be able to detach individualist libertarians from their thrall to a Conservative Movement that had become the major enemy of their own ideals and principles; and, furthermore, to try to infuse into the often instinctively libertarian New Left an increased knowledge of economics and an appreciation of a truly free-market economy.

We must say that while we hoped for a modicum of success, we expected none at all; and that, in our short span, we have succeeded beyond our wildest dreams. The response from all sides to our fitful efforts, efforts without benefit of advertising budget, has been truly remarkable. We have had enthusiastic expressions of approval and support from people of all manner of occupations and ideological positions: from economists, historians, sociologists, philosophers, journalists, and editors; from unemployed scholars, trade union officials, and foundation and trade association executives; from engineers, accountants, businessmen, and school teachers; from libertarians, left and right, from pacifists, isolationists, anarchists (left, right, and center), voluntary communalists, ex-Wobblies, Egoists, autarchists, creative Marxists, neo-Maoists, Irish nationalists, Birchers, classical liberals, and thinking Conservatives; from atheists, agnostics, Protestants, Jews, Catholics, and Jesuits. Most important of all is the enthusiasm we appear to have sparked in groups of college students across the country: in colleges and universities in New York, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Illinois, Kansas, and California, eager groups of students have coalesced around an emphatic and determined Left/Right orientation. In quite a few cases, these are former leaders of YAF or ISI who have now joined SDS or local Free Universities.

Evidence of an extensive impact for our fledgling journal has already found its way into print. A conservative newsletter that likes to think of itself as libertarian has grumpily complained that we have "monopolized" the libertarian name. In the Daily Tar Heel, student newspaper at the University of North Carolina, Wilson Clark, Jr. has developed an explicitly Left/Right position. And our magazine and its position were hailed in the New Republic by Professor Ronald Hamowy of the history department of Stanford University, in commenting on a series of articles by young radicals of the present-day.¹

Throughout the land, heartening evidence continues to mount that a market does exist for our efforts, that enough individualists have become uneasy with the New Conservatism and enough leftists critical of the centralized State to provide the basis for a genuine ideological realignment in this country.

1. Ronald Hamowy, "Left and Right Meet," The New Republic (March 12, 1966), pp. 14-16, and Wilson Clark Jr., "Common Ground for Right and Left," The Daily Tar Heel (April 13, 1966), p. 2.