

With this issue, *Stand* enters a new phase in its history. The outer symbols of the change – a new format and the beginning of New Series numbering – are of little importance in themselves. The new departures in the organic life of the magazine, on the other hand, are as much of the essence as the continuities.

Under its distinguished founder, the late Jon Silkin, who edited it until his death in November 1997, *Stand* was at the forefront of literary periodicals in Britain. In its heyday, commonly perceived to have been the Sixties and Seventies, it attracted and published work of a high calibre and commanded the respect of the reading community. Celebrated for the quality of its poetry, fiction and criticism, *Stand* was noted also for the internationalism of its outlook, its commitment to the politics of a post-imperial and post-patriarchal world, and the catholicism of its aesthetic catchment. It has had many other qualities too, among them a discriminating loyalty to the North of England base which provided it with a regional accent.

This legacy matters greatly. We mean to retain *Stand's* liberal humanist commitment to the transformed societal and intellectual character of the times, just as we mean to uphold its dedication to the best in poetry and prose. The strengths of *Stand*, from its openness to writing of many different kinds and provenances to its happy ability to unite the international and (in the best sense) the provincial, seem to us seminal if a literary quarterly is to stake a serious claim to attention.

The re-conceived *Stand* will also extend its brief. There will be greater critical coverage of new fiction, there will be essays on wider cultural concerns, and there will be substantial features. Among features in preparation for the next twelve months are a tribute to Peter Porter in the year of his seventieth birthday; a conspectus of the diverse kinds of British post-modern writing with an assessment of its current state and status in an international context; a celebration of Eugenio Montale; a focus on new African writing; and a look at contemporary Turkish writing and publishing and the question (in the context of the ongoing socio-political debate) of whether Turkey is *culturally* a part of Europe. *Stand* is concerned with what happens when cultures and literatures meet, with translation in its many guises, with the mechanics of language, with the processes by which the polity receives or disables its cultural makers. We plan to pitch our stall in the forum, establishing a new reading series, working with sister quarterlies in other countries and with established literature venues and institutions in Europe and beyond, and promoting debate of issues that are of radical concern to the intellectual community worldwide. The changes we mean to make cannot all be introduced immediately, and we expect to be broadening the magazine's

base steadily over the coming months and years. Our rule throughout will be simple: yes to the currents genuinely flexing through and shaping the times, no to fashions, hype and ephemera.

A glance at the contents page will show a new principle at work. The rubrics under which the writing in this issue is presented were partly designed by editorial decision and partly suggested by the material we received, and this is how we mean to go on. Features now in preparation naturally entail an amount of planning; equally, they will doubtless be abetted by an amount of serendipity; but for unsolicited work of quality, whether by the established writer or the first-time aspirant, there will always be a place in *Stand* regardless of what we might be pursuing at the time. Our paramount aim remains the basic one that this magazine has always followed: to publish the best writing we can find.



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