

EDITORS' COMMENT

THE LAUNCHING

by Ralph Summy

This is our/your first issue. Your pre-publication response has been extremely encouraging. Not only have we found **general** enthusiasm for the idea of a journal like **Social Alternatives**, but **tangibly**, many of you have expressed your faith in the project by taking out annual subscriptions ('sight-unseen'), and by submitting your own material for consideration in future issues. Clearly, the desire and need for a journal that focuses on the development of concrete proposals for effecting social change within a value framework of freedom, equality and democracy exists amongst a broad section of the community, both local and international.

As this first issue indicates, whilst the editorial policy is to emphasize alternative proposals, there is no intention of denying the importance of clarifying the theoretical framework by which social and political issues are discerned and examined. Moreover the diversity in this issue – covering a wide range of subjects, disciplines, styles and methodologies – reflects a deliberate policy on the part of the editors, whose own backgrounds and interests vary greatly. One editor for instance, is primarily interested in the problems of women, another in peace studies and research, a third in industrial democracy, and so on. Yet a common thread is shared by all – that of providing a radical outlet for the communicating of new ideas in various areas across the artificial barriers that even intelligent people, for many

reasons (e.g. insecurity, elitism, and thoughtlessness), are inclined to erect ... and hence impede progress towards a more humane society.

Social Alternatives does not hold to a particular line. The editors believe there are a number of challenging and fruitful perspectives or matrices of thought to explore. As the lead article, **The Prison Diary of Jayaprakash Narayan**, implies in its concluding entry, there are many paths leading towards truth, and only the fool or tyrant thinks s/he has found **the answer**. The search down many paths is an on-going process of human endeavour.

But there is one thing that is fixed in our minds. Our broadly conceived aim is to help foster a series of concentric communities where human beings will all practise those skills which all may possess in common: truthfulness, consideration of others, a sense of proportion in undertakings and in ambitions, and the various human traits associated with loving people outwardly while retaining an abiding respectful sense of self.

We present this first publication to our readers with an apology for not meeting our self-imposed deadline. Although we expected the usual run of unexpected delays due to the late submission of some articles, the editors fighting bouts of various Queensland bugs (not all political), or encountering the usual (or perhaps not so usual) personal problems, not to mention

the occasional breakdown of modern technology and machinery, we were hit with one blow that really sent us reeling and proved to be extremely time-consuming. After receiving the promise of a \$3,500 launching grant by the Department of External Studies at the University of Queensland, this commitment was overruled by conservative University authorities – despite a University history of having financed other publications out of research funds. The task of the editors in arguing for the launching grant was made virtually impossible, as the major official concerned informed us that he **could not** tell us the reasons that were presented against the grant by the two persons who lodged appeals. Besides having to argue our case in the dark, so to speak, it was our contention that the University's rules of procedure did not even provide the right for this type of appeal. Nevertheless, the appeals were accepted and the grant denied, after your editors had expended enormous amounts of energy advancing what we thought was a just case.

The loss of the finance, of course, was crucial. Were it not for the enthusiastic response of the public, we wouldn't be coming out with this issue at all. The financial situation remains acute, and we call upon every supporter of the journal to subscribe and/or make a donation. We especially need help in the early stages, as there are good prospects of receiving a recurrent grant from an international body (not one

associated with any special interests) once three issues have been produced. Whatever happens on the financial front, we are committed to producing four issues per year (Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter), and we will always honour our subscription obligations.

You may notice that rather than the 72 pages we normally plan to produce for each issue, we have added some extra pages to this first edition in order to compensate for the late publication date.

We hope that what you read on the following pages will inspire you to help us establish the journal on a financially sounder and thus assured permanent basis. In addition to your subscriptions and donations, we look forward to receiving your comments about **Social Alternatives**, favourable or critical.

We believe that anyone seriously engaged in formulating alternatives to existing policies and structures must be prepared not only to enter into self-criticism but welcome the criticism of others. We are aware that in terms of the journal's

objectives there are some important deficiencies in this first issue e.g. language could be more lucid, and there could be more policy and strategic alternatives. Would you now give us your views on these and other matters ?

We also welcome from all our readers contributions of articles. But please remember, the focus of **Social Alternatives** is on alternatives.

This is your forum!

SOCIAL ALTERNATIVES

THE NEW INTERNATIONAL QUARTERLY PUBLISHED IN AUSTRALIA

SOCIAL ALTERNATIVES seeks to break outside the conventional means by which social problems are defined, social policies formulated, strategies designed, and solutions put into effect. The major emphasis of the journal is the development of alternative proposals to effect social change toward greater freedom, equality and democracy.

The following themes are suggested in this context and are an ongoing concern of the journal:

PEACE STUDIES AND RESEARCH	RACISM	EDUCATION INNOVATION
INDUSTRIAL DEMOCRACY	SEXISM	CRIME AND THE LAW
SOCIAL INEQUALITY	MEDIA	THE ENVIRONMENT
TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION	SOCIAL WELFARE	POVERTY
SOCIAL CONTROL MECHANISMS	MENTAL HEALTH	RELATED ISSUES

SOCIAL ALTERNATIVES seeks contributions in line with these themes -- articles, research findings, reviews of books, films, plays, graphics, news of conferences, courses, short stories, poems, photographs etc.

Send all contributions or subscriptions to : The Editors, Social Alternatives, c/- Department of External Studies, University of Queensland, St. Lucia, Qld., Australia 4067.

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