

Some proposals for launching a  
Journal of Arts and Ideas

For more than a year now, some of us have been seriously thinking of the problems we have been facing, as cultural workers, due to the absence of a proper forum where we cannot merely communicate and report on the work we have been engaged in, but also come to know of corresponding activities by workers similarly placed in different parts of the country. Such communication as has been possible has entirely been unorganised, fortuitous and perfunctory; what is needed is a more regular and dependable forum for such exchanges. On this question, some of us have met informally, over the past one year in various places, more by accident than design, and the Kasuali seminar last year and the Desabhimani Seminar in Calicut last month provided further occasions for us to continue discussions on the subject. Following these deliberations, it was decided that we should meet in Bombay and formalise proposals for giving a proper structure and shape to the forum.

We now agree that a Journal would be the best way in which such a forum should be structured; and that such a journal, to be published six times a year, in English, must be based in Bangalore. The necessary infrastructural support for the venture has been assured friends in Bangalore. Though it may not be possible initially, to acquire the services of a full time editor, our aim is to finally entrust the responsibility of bringing out the journal to a full-time editor, supported by a modest complement of staff.

Discussions about the form and content of the journal have had to be necessarily preliminary academic at this stage; what is

: 2 :

put down here is only a broad outline. The journal, to be named Journal for Cultural Action (JCA), is to be a journal of arts and ideas in the broadest sense of the term. It would aim to include in its ambit visual and plastic arts, film, music, theatre, painting and architecture; and their interaction with political and social developments. In other words, since we believe that the best kind of creative work necessarily has to have an interaction with the broader field of social and political action, the journal would aim to illustrate (or where necessary, promote) this interaction through its articles, reports and comments.

This perception of the nature and the role of the journal naturally defines both its form and content. While avoiding all kinds of rigid sectarianism by being an open forum for the best creative and critical writing on the arts, the very approach of the journal lays down that its perspective is going to be broadly of the left. In theoretical terms, it means that the journal would attempt to explain and analyse the material basis of all art and artistic endeavour, the close links that the greatest and the most enduring art has had with the most common and universal experiences of the broad masses of the people. This is true even of the most sophisticated forms of creative expression in line and colour, in words and sounds. How exactly these links are going to be analysed and explained, it is too early and premature for a mere brochure like this to expatiate upon; but within the broad limits and definitions that we have prescribed for ourselves, we hope to make the journal meet both the creative and critical needs of workers in the field of arts, as well as their audience.

: 3 :

In more specific terms, the proposed journal is going to be planned in such a way that it will carry, in every issue, at least one reasoned and fully researched and documented article on any aspect of the arts; competent reviews of significant developments in the field; and critical comments and notes, including news items. It is also proposed to have occasional in-depth interviews with workers in the field of creative arts with a view to highlighting their problems, as well as getting them to understand and respond positively to the problems that their audiences have with their works.

Such a venture, if it has to be sustained over a period, naturally needs, above all, the fullest co-operation from the creative workers themselves. We know fully well that most creative workers are themselves preoccupied with their own specific tasks and even those of us who have enthusiastically taken up the cause and are committed to being actively associated with the venture are not unmindful of the problems we face, including the problems we ourselves might create. Chiefly, the problem would be one of securing an assured supply of serious and well-reasoned articles on various aspects of the arts. But this is a problem that any journal will have to face and we only hope that we and our fellow-workers in the field will not fail.

The precise institutional identity of the proposed journal is still being discussed; but we have agreed that it would be advisable to register ourselves as a Trust which in effect will be the 'owner' and 'publisher' of the journal. In order to be able to make a serious beginning of the activities of the Trust, it is proposed to raise a modest fund which will form the core-support of

: 4 :

of the Trust's activities. About Rs. 50,000 is proposed to be raised, mainly through the help and co-operation of some of the creative workers who have agreed to associate themselves with this venture. Commitments to raise certain specific amounts have already been made by friends in Bombay and Delhi and requests for such pledges are being addressed to friends in other places. Any contribution, howsoever modest, will be welcome, and can be sent to the address at the end of this brochure. Similarly, all suggestions regarding the form and content of the journal, as well as on the points made in this appeal, would also be most welcome.

PRASANNA  
46 Shop Street  
Basavanagudi  
Bangalore 560 004