Explaining the Transaction Consortium

by Irving Louis Horowitz

For several years readers of *transaction/SOCIETY* have seen advertisements for an entity called the Transaction Periodicals Consortium. As an inevitable consequence, there have been queries seeking an explanation of this entity and its relationship to *SOCIETY* magazine or Transaction as a corporate name. Aside from perfunctory remarks in the Ten Year Survey, published in the November 1972 issue of the magazine, we have made no real effort to describe the Consortium and its purpose. Belatedly, we would like here to briefly outline our Consortium and how it functions.

The Consortium is not an effort to move into editorial control and ownership domain of other journals. Rather, the foundation of our Consortium is the maintenance of independent editorial positions, and equally, strengthening the autonomy in the ownership structure of each publication. In this way, the journals retain their independence and, at the same time, the Consortium has the advantage of working with highly motivated editors and organizations which prefer being treated as unique and distinct activities. The most direct expression of the fact of independence and autonomy is the individuality of each publication. Unlike other consortia, we make no effort to "gang-run" these publications one with the other, or to make them all look alike by producing them in the same size, type, and format. Ours is a consortium, not a collectivity; a group of periodicals that have banded together for mutual strength, but not at the expense of individual differences.

The current fiscal crisis, acutely reflected in the soaring costs of maintaining scholarly publications, requires a consortium approach for the survival and growth of smaller social science periodicals, and increasingly, larger publications such as *transaction/SOCIETY* and *Working Papers for a New Society*. For this reason, several years ago we established a periodicals service division called Transaction Periodicals Consortium. We have distinguished a series of technical functions that must be performed by any technical journal. Basically, there are seven different such functions: 1) editing and copy-editing services; 2) composition, printing, and binding; 3)
marketing, i.e., letting other periodicals know of the existence of Consortium publication; 4) advertising, i.e., encouraging the placement of advertisements in Consortium publication; 5) mailing and shipping; 6) subscription fulfillment and file maintenance; 7) bookkeeping and auditing. We feel that the Transaction Periodicals Consortium can be competitive in each of these areas.

For most small journals to provide a full range of technical services is virtually impossible — certainly without a continuing external subvention that fewer periodicals can garner, and when they can, in smaller amounts than in the past. We have created both an economy and technology of scale which ordinarily accrues to larger publications. Our approach is to perform each of these non-editorial services associated with the publication of social science periodicals, and in this way, to insure that the editors and directors of these journals achieve the highest level of professional services feasible at the lowest possible costs.

Currently, we handle ten distinct and distinctive social science periodicals. Each represents a separate part of the social science forest, and at the same time, a shared set of values in the uses of reason to illuminate the human condition. These journals include: *The Review of Black Political Economy*, *Working Papers for a New Society*, *Third World*, *The Urban League Review*, *Middle East Review*, *Journal of Jazz Studies*, *Human Communication Research*, *Studies in Comparative International Development*, *Journal of Family Counseling* and *International Journal of Critical Sociology*. *Journal of Social History* left the Consortium when its editorial base shifted from Rutgers University to Carnegie-Mellon University—a fact which, in its own way, illustrates the autonomous nature of this Consortium.

Many of these journals are linked to organizational efforts. *The Review of Black Political Economy* is a central activity of the Black Economic Research Center, one of the most advanced efforts in the area of racial equity and independence in the American economy. *Human Communication Research* is a technical arm of the International Communication Association, a rapidly rising and expanding area in the social sciences. *Working Papers for a New Society* is affiliated with the Cambridge Policy Studies Institute which, in turn, has fraternal links to the Policy Research Institute in Washington, D.C. *Third World* is the official organ of the Fabian Society, an organization which dates back to the era of H.G. Wells and George Bernard Shaw in Edwardian England. *Journal of Family Counseling* is the official organ of the National Alliance for Family Life.

*The Urban League Review* and the *Middle East Review* are entirely new