

Studies and documents on cultural policies

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# Cultural policy in *Great Britain*

by Michael Green and Michael Wilding  
in consultation with Professor Richard Hoggart

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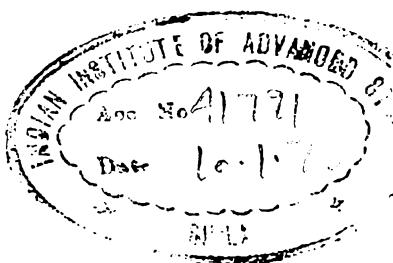
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# Preface

The publication of this series has been undertaken as part of the programme adopted by the General Conference of Unesco at its fifteenth session for the study of cultural policies.

In this context 'cultural policy' is taken to mean a body of operational principles, administrative and budgetary practices and procedures which provide a basis for cultural action by the State. Obviously, there cannot be *one* cultural policy suited to all countries; each Member State determines its own cultural policy according to the cultural values, aims and choices it sets for itself.

It has been largely recognized that there is a need for exchanges of information and experience between countries as well as for cross-national investigations on specific themes, research into concepts and methods, etc.

The aim of this series, therefore, is to contribute to the dissemination of information by presenting both the findings of such studies and various national surveys illustrating problems, experiments and achievements in individual countries chosen as representative of differing socio-economic systems, regional areas and levels of development. To achieve a measure of comparability, an attempt has been made to follow, as far as possible, a fairly similar pattern and method of approach.

The survey has been prepared for Unesco by Michael Green and Michael Wilding, of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies of the University of Birmingham, in consultation with Professor Richard Hoggart, Director of the Centre. The opinions expressed are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect the views of Unesco.



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This report is an assessment of cultural policy in England, Scotland, and Wales. It attempts to outline the overall shape of British policy, and to enumerate some its virtues and current difficulties. Particular examples are drawn largely from English experience, since an adequate exposition of the special problems concerning the development and integrity of traditional Welsh and Scottish cultures would require greater space than we were able to provide.

Though the report is largely factual, and at every point checked against facts where known, it necessarily involves some interpretation and evaluation of current trends, for which the authors, not Unesco, are responsible.

We are greatly indebted to Clive Barker, Sandy Dunbar and John English for help in the preparation of the report, and to Michael Walker and colleagues at the Department of Education and Science for their comments upon the factual content of a draft version.

Permission to reprint material is gratefully acknowledged to: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., for an extract from William A. Robson's *The Development of Local Government* (1931, 3rd ed. 1954); Chatto & Windus Ltd., for an extract from Raymond William's *Communications* (1962); Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. and University of Toronto Press, for extracts from J. F. C. Harrison's *Learning and Living, 1790-1960* (1961); Beacon Press and Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., for an extract from Herbert Marcuse's *One Dimensional Man* (1964).

M. G.  
M. W.

# Growth and main methods of public support and planning

Official support for the arts in Great Britain can be seen to have three distinct historical phases during this century.

First, there was before the Second World War virtually no cultural action initiated by official government policy, with the important exception of the establishment of public libraries and museums by the Museums and Gymnasiums Act, 1891, and the Public Libraries Act, 1892. Nor was there a tradition of local government support. Professor William A. Robson wrote in his *The Development of Local Government*:<sup>1</sup>

The most obvious defect in English local government at present is the almost complete neglect by the municipality of the cultural elements in social life. We have no municipal theatres, no municipal opera houses, scarcely any municipal concerts of the first rank, and hardly a municipal picture gallery or museum worthy of a great city. The whole force of municipal enterprise has been concentrated into the utilitarian channels of public health and police, roads and housing, gas and water, while all the finer aspects of civic life have been persistently ignored.

In December 1939, however, the Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts (CEMA) was instituted to preserve cultural traditions and activities during the war, and to extend the accessibility of music, drama and the other arts to the provinces. It gave financial support to voluntary organizations and sponsored some activities itself; it drew its grant from the Ministry of Education. It was from CEMA that the Arts Council grew.

A second phase begins, therefore, with the establishment of the Arts Council by Royal Charter in 1946. The council was conceived of neither as a government department, nor as a Ministry of Culture. It drew its grant from the Treasury, but itself decided how its money was spent. (These financial arrangements have since been altered and are described below.) The council's aims are described in the revised Royal Charter of 1967. The third paragraph of this charter indicates 'the objects for which the council was established and incorporated'. They include:

(a) to develop and improve the knowledge, understanding and practice of the arts;

1. London, 1931, 3rd ed. 1954, p. 280.

- (b) to increase the accessibility of the arts to the public throughout Great Britain;
- (c) to advise and co-operate with Departments of government, local authorities and other bodies on any matters concerned whether directly or indirectly with the foregoing objects.

But for two decades the council's grants were small and its activities seriously hampered by lack of money. The council has described its method of operation during that period as controlled by 'the poor-law technique of limiting our assistance to a bare subsistence level, with stringent means tests'.<sup>1</sup> In 1958, for instance, the council began an inquiry published in two parts in 1959 and 1961 as *Housing the Arts in Britain*; but it could not implement the recommendations of its report because of a shortage of funds, and the developments which took place as a result of the inquiry could receive only token council support.

Meanwhile, the post-war Labour Government had, in Section 132 of its Local Government Act, 1948, encouraged greater efforts from local authorities (though even before the war some larger cities had obtained legal powers to aid or promote cultural activities in private Bills—for example, the London County Council's General Powers Acts in 1935 and 1947). Under the new statute, a local authority might spend not more than the product of a sixpenny rate to provide or contribute towards the provision of any form of entertainment, and to provide theatres, concert halls, and other premises for the purposes of such entertainment. (A sixpenny rate is 2.5 per cent of the money raised from local property taxes.) The power under the statute is permissive, not compulsory. Authorities may spend up to the product of a sixpenny rate, but are not compelled to. It has been estimated that if the full sixpenny rate were generally levied, it would provide over £50 million each year for arts and entertainment.<sup>2</sup>

In fact, the rate has rarely been fully used by local authorities, partly perhaps through ignorance of how to spend it, more often because the arts have seemed the least defensible part of the local budget. (There is a brief and depressing account of local authorities' attitudes to the arts in Harvey Benham's *Two Cheers for the Town Hall*).<sup>3</sup> Authorities have not been anxious to publicize their record in this field, and figures are hard to obtain. Authorities claim that there is indirect spending on the arts under the education rate; and in any case, civic entertainment in the widest sense allowed under the 1948 Act includes pigeon racing, swimming galas and old-time dancing. Nevertheless, the Political and Economic Planning (PEP) report, *Sponsorship of Music* (1966), estimated on the basis of a comprehensive questionnaire that local authorities spent some £2.75 million in 1964-65 on sponsoring the performing arts, of which about £1.5 million was spent on music. (In the same year the Arts Council had spent £2.75 million and the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) about £1 million, on music.) The report found indications that the authorities' expenditure in this area had grown rapidly, perhaps by as much as 10 to 15 per cent

1. Arts Council Report, 1965-66, *Key Year*, p. 9.

2. Political and Economic Planning, Report, *Public Patronage of the Arts*. London, 1965.

3. London, 1964, p. 246-9.

per annum, over the previous four years. But more recent information offers a gloomy picture. In evidence to the House of Commons Estimates Committee<sup>1</sup> it was shown that of the 70 per cent of English and Welsh authorities who completed a questionnaire on the subject—962 returns in all—only 75 had spent the product of more than a penny rate, and that 581 authorities had spent nothing whatsoever. (The Stratford on Avon authority, for instance, gives no money to the Royal Shakespeare Theatre which provides the town with very substantial tourist income.) There are a few, but only a few, honourable exceptions in a generally dismal field.

A third phase in official support for the arts may be taken to date from 1964 and the election of a Labour Government which has, at least in its first two years of office, substantially increased government aid to the arts. The Labour Government's interest has coincided with, and no doubt reinforced and partly caused, the growth of a remarkable change of thinking about the arts in Great Britain generally. The whole question of public subsidy is currently taken seriously and vigorously discussed as never before. It may be an indication of a new consensus that a Conservative Party one-day arts seminar, held in March 1969, accepted almost without argument the necessity for strong State support.

But the same general case for official support is being argued on a striking variety of premisses. The most familiar argument is that increased educational provision does, or should, lead to a greater demand for the arts. The Director of the Midlands Arts Centre for Young People (described in a later chapter) told the Commons committee:

It is surprising that at the end of four or five generations of general education participation has not kept pace with the growth in population. I believe I am right in saying that the number of people going into the art gallery is less now than it was in the nineteenth century although the population has multiplied four or five times. When we produced that figure we went into the school-leaving forms of the secondary modern schools because we could not believe this was the result of the work being done in the years of formal education. We found that 20 per cent of the youngsters in their school-leaving years had developed social and cultural activities. We were able to 'ring' them and found that within two years their participation had dropped to the level of the society around them. [p. 163]<sup>2</sup>

The reason for decreased participation he saw in the absence of sufficient or sufficiently attractive facilities. A second argument talks of the 'problem', or even 'threat', of increasing leisure time which people will not know how to fill. A third, often made for example by local champions of new theatres, sees the artistic strength of a region as an important bait to new industry or to a growth of population. In a House of Lords debate<sup>3</sup>, the Arts Council's Chairman, Lord Goodman, commented:

I believe that there is a crucial state in the country at this moment. I believe that young people lack values, lack certainties, lack guidance; that they need something to turn to;

1. *Grants for the Arts*, p. 576, London, HMSO, 1968.

2. The page numbers which appear in brackets at the end of quotations refer to *Grants for the Arts*, the eighth report from the House of Commons Estimates Committee — the most important single document in this field.

3. 19 April 1967.

and need it more desperately than they have needed it at any time in our history—certainly, at any time which I can recollect. I do not say that the Arts will furnish a total solution, but I believe that once young people are captured for the Arts they are redeemed from many of the dangers which confront them at the moment and which have been occupying the attention of the Government in a completely unprofitable and destructive fashion. I believe that here we have constructive work to do which can be of inestimable value.

Both the argument and its phrasing are striking.

Two general issues cut across these and other pleas for increased arts subsidy. First, there is a division between those who accept fairly traditional received definitions of 'the arts', which they wish to see subsidized on the scale now appropriate (opera is the clearest case of the economic necessity for State support) and made accessible to an educated audience; and others who argue that 'all men are artists by nature' and insist on much broader definitions of 'the arts', to include jazz, pop music and television plays, for instance, among their most thriving branches. A related difference is partly established by this argument between alternative priorities: an audience to observe and enjoy the traditionally recognized 'best'; or a much wider audience, participating in a broader range of artistic activities at a perhaps 'lower' level. Disagreement over these priorities is particularly acute, for example, between different groups in the British theatre.

Second, it is common to find, even among people genuinely concerned to expand artistic provision, a strong wish to avoid being or appearing paternalistic:

A large section of the population is completely indifferent to anything that comes under the general heading of 'culture' and they have every right to stay in that state of non-grace . . . The appetite for culture in this country is less voracious than many of us pretend.<sup>1</sup>

There are traces of the same wish in some of the Arts Council's statements of policy, which are examined in the last chapter.

In its election publication, *Leisure for Living* (1964), the Labour Party had noted the need for major changes in government attitudes to the arts. In office, it soon published a White Paper, *A Policy for the Arts* (1965), of major significance. It stated categorically that 'more generous and discriminating help is urgently needed, locally, regionally, and nationally'. Miss Jennie Lee had already become Joint Parliamentary Secretary with special responsibility for the arts at the Ministry of Public Building and Works; she was transferred to the Department of Education and Science in 1965 and was made a Minister of State there in 1967. The immediate results of Labour policy, and of Miss Lee's powers of advocacy in a period of extreme economic crisis, speak for themselves in the figures for the Arts Council's grant since its inception. The increase since 1964 has been remarkable (as shown in the table opposite).

It will be seen that the grant doubled within the first two years of the Labour Government though the rate of increase has slackened thereafter, particularly when inflation is taken into account.

<sup>1</sup>. *Public Patronage of the Arts*. London, 1965.

Year	Grant (£)	Year	Grant (£)	Year	Grant (£)
1946-47	350,000	1954-55	785,000	1962-63	2,190,000
1947-48	428,000	1955-56	820,000	1963-64	2,730,000
1948-49	575,000	1956-57	885,000	1964-65	3,205,000
1949-50	600,000	1957-58	985,000	1965-66	3,840,000
1950-51	675,000	1958-59	1,100,000	1966-67	5,700,000
1951-52	875,000 <sup>1</sup>	1959-60	1,218,000	1967-68	7,200,000
1952-53	675,000	1960-61	1,500,000	1968-69	7,750,000
1953-54	785,000	1961-62	1,745,000	1969-70	8,200,000

1. Includes £300,000 for the Festival of Britain.

### Main methods of public support

#### *Department of Education and Science*

A second consequence of the Labour Government's policy was the transference of the Arts Council's grant source from the Treasury to the Department of Education and Science. The change was a policy move towards a degree of co-ordination in cultural planning which is quite new to Great Britain. Miss Lee, besides her work for the arts, has taken over responsibility for museums and public galleries from the Ministry of Public Buildings and Works. The crucial feature of the new arrangement is that it allows support for the arts to proceed in conjunction with a determined re-thinking of the role of the arts in schools and universities. *A Policy for the Arts* stated that

the place that the arts occupy in the life of the nation is largely a reflection of the time and effort devoted to them in schools and colleges.

The future encouragement of the arts is to be firmly based on work in the arts with young people. The Department of Education and Science (DES) noted in its memorandum to the Commons committee that

the Department has collaborated with the Arts Council in undertaking, for example, a survey of drama in the schools, which links closely with the Arts Council's own report on theatre for young people. [p. 2]

The Commons committee reported that

The functions of the Department of Education and Science *vis-à-vis* the Arts Council are much the same as those of Bagehot's monarchy—to be consulted, to encourage and to warn. [p. vii]

A departmental assessor on the council is an important channel of information between the two bodies but

is nevertheless very chary about intervening except where the direct responsibility of the

department is at stake, or where the Arts Council are proposing to do something which might be outside their charter, or likely to lead to financial difficulties. [p. vii]

Because of this link and other contacts, a DES under—secretary told the committee, by the time the council's annual estimates are submitted

we know pretty well what is in the Arts Council's mind. On the basis of that we look at the matter and form our own judgments. We then submit our proposals to the Minister who decides what sum shall be requested from the Treasury. This is finally conveyed as a decision to the Arts Council and the Arts Council then have that sum of money on which to operate the next year. It is understood, however, that in actually expending the money the Arts Council has freedom to vary the expenditure. They are not tied to the details of the estimates as submitted . . . [p. 4]

The Arts Council of Great Britain appoints, in consultation with the Secretaries of State for Wales and for Scotland, a Scottish Arts Council and a Welsh Arts Council. The Scottish Arts Council received £795,000, the Welsh Arts Council £527,000 from a £7.75 million total in 1968-69.

Theatres and opera companies, in particular, have complained of the difficulties in planning ahead on the basis of a yearly grant, of which late notice has sometimes been given. To meet this problem, the Commons committee recommended that

D.E.S. should again enter into negotiations with the Arts Council, this time using 1969-70 as a base for putting the grant on a rolling triennial footing; that the grant when arrived at should be expressed as 'not less than' that sum; that for purposes of these negotiations the Arts Council should immediately call for the appropriate forward figures from at least all the larger and medium sized organisations; that the triennial agreement should include . . . escalation provisions . . .; and that it should be made clear to the organisations that in circumstances of severe economic difficulty (for which it might be advisable to define an objective criterion in advance) it remains possible for D.E.S. to reassess the level of grant for ensuing years, having given the earliest possible notice that it is considering doing so. [p. xxvi]

Two other bodies, the British Film Institute and the British Institute of Recorded Sound, receive grants through DES on a similar basis. Here again grants have risen considerably: in the case of BFI, from £107,250 in 1964-65 to £410,000 in 1968-69; in the case of BIRS, from £13,750 in 1964-65 to £30,000 in 1968-69.

When asked by the Chairman of the Commons committee, 'what do you do to stimulate the local authorities?', the department's representative replied

Stimulus is very much a matter of response. If it were felt in the country that the Ministry or the Arts Council were trying to foist associations on different parts of the country, I think this would be very counter-productive. I am sure the Minister would agree with that. This is very much a matter of policy . . . this is a matter where the local authorities must make their own running. [p. 12]

The reluctance to impose ideas deserves notice. We comment upon it in the final chapter.

### *The Arts Council*

The Chairman of the Arts Council, asked to comment on this arrangement, told the same committee:

It has had some growing pains but on the whole it is working out quite well. We are obviously having to establish a principle, and it is a very important principle, at a time when public subsidy has increased very largely. We set very much store upon emphasising very strongly that we retain our total independence, secondly that we are not operating under a Ministry of Culture, and thirdly that the organisations we subsidise have as much independence as we have ourselves. Those are the three principles we try to operate. [p. 46]

The decision to channel government support to the arts not directly from a government department, but through an autonomous 'buffer' institution, is a very important characteristic of British thinking. A similar organization, for example, is the University Grants Committee, which receives money directly from the government for the finance of the universities, and then dispenses it at its own discretion.

The Arts Council's activities, its Chairman has said,

logically break down into two main headings. The major one is to create larger audiences for the arts, i.e. to provide the theatres, the orchestras, the halls, the education and the programmes, so that more and more people may become interested in, fond of, and anxious to collaborate in the arts. Our second activity, no less important but on the whole involving less of our money, is to encourage and assist the artist. [p. 50]

In addition:

A great deal of our work has nothing to do with giving away money. Our extraneous, extra-mural work is almost as important and valuable as our grants. This is a point I am very anxious to make. [p. 59]

This 'extraneous' work offer consists of advice over policy.

The bulk of the council's grant (which may very occasionally be withdrawn if work is not up to standard) is given to the performing arts. Where possible the council tries to gain partnership in support from the local authority ('although almost always it turns out that the maximum contribution comes from us'). The relative division of the grant between various arts and between different organizations in the same art is 'subject to historic explanations':

Once we decide an institution is worthy to be alive our concern is to keep it alive and to assess its needs on that basis. To that extent comparison can only produce a second line basis. There must be some element of comparison, because they must not be too disparate, but you cannot exercise comparison as a criterion for determining what people are to have, or you would not be able to do the job at all. [p. 47]

Within the different arts an attempt is being made to introduce certain guiding principles; a council report led to the establishment of a London Orchestral Board, to co-ordinate and rationalize the activities of the London orchestras, and the council is currently preparing major reports on opera and ballet and on theatre which may have similar results.

The nature of the Council's over-all cultural 'policy' is discussed in the first part of the final chapter.

### *Local authorities*

The opportunity for the expenditure of money raised through the rates has already been described. On the whole, it has scarcely been used at all. In the present economic circumstances it seems impossible that authorities will change their policies towards the arts. As a Coventry councillor told the Commons committee:

If you asked me at this moment whether the City Council would be willing to give the Belgrade Theatre or any other cultural activity more money in the year ahead I would say there is not a ghost of a chance. Looking ahead we are positively alarmed at the picture of local government expenditure here as against what the government has said is to be the rate of growth so far as national expenditure is concerned in the field of local government. We are wondering how we are going to meet a target of that sort; and how we are to meet these other unmet demands, born of problems of the past, we cannot imagine. Therefore the rate fund is going to catch it heavily if the government adheres to its policy, because there are many things we have set in motion which we cannot stop. The picture for the next five years is very depressing. [p. 156]

There is one direct way of improving the authorities' feeble post-war record: to make the expenditure of the produce of some part of a local property tax (the 'rate') compulsory. The idea has found many supporters, among them the Arts Council Chairman, who thought that local authorities

ought to have an obligation to spend a certain amount of money on the arts out of their revenues. I do not think there would be anything shocking about this, nor that there would be a great area of waste. This would be the sensible way of doing it . . . There would be some hostility to it but I can see no objection in principle. I think it would work [p. 484-5].

### *Regional arts associations*

The Arts Council closed its regional offices in 1956. Since then two types of regional arts association have grown up.

The first type is a federation of local societies and individuals, interested in co-ordinating activities and exchanging information. It does not receive financial aid directly from local authorities. Examples are the South-Western Arts Association (founded 1956) and the Midlands Association for the Arts.

The second type is a regional association which involves not only local societies but also local authorities, private firms in industry and commerce, nationalized industries, trade unions, chambers of commerce, universities and many other bodies—besides artistic organizations and private individuals.

It is the second type which the White Paper, *A Policy for the Arts*, referred to when it declared that a 'network' of such associations 'should be developed to cover the whole country'—and the model was taken to be, in particular, the first and most important of these associations, the Northern Arts Association (founded as the North

Eastern Association for the Arts in 1961). NAA has been called by the Arts Council 'a prototype of patronage' and 'an example which should be followed elsewhere'. The council said, in its report for 1965-66:

There is no doubt that if the newly established associations prove themselves to be as effective as the N.A.A., the Arts Council would recognise them as proper instruments for distributing part of its subsidies for the arts, and such a set-up could provide an excellent way of re-establishing the regional well-being of the arts in this country.

The primary aim of the association was to promote the activities of all those concerned with the arts in the north-east of England. Its initial region of North-umberland, Durham and part of the North Riding of Yorkshire has been extended to include Cumberland and Westmorland—an area of 7,400 square miles containing a population of 3.2 million (almost the same region as that of the government's North Regional Economic Planning Board and Council).

From the very wide range of individuals and organizations which make up NAA's general membership (meeting annually) is elected an Executive Committee of thirty-one members, meeting six times a year to 'formulate policy, approve estimates and authorise expenditure'.<sup>1</sup> A subcommittee of eight, called the Policy Advisory Committee, meets six times a year to recommend general policy and deal with matters of personnel, administration and fund-raising. The Executive Committee takes the advice of five specialist advisory panels for music, drama, visual arts, literature, and film, radio and television. These panels include theatre directors, playwrights and other professional advisers.

The association's range of activities over the last few years has been enormous and very varied. Its judgement on artistic matters is now widely respected and trusted, not least by local councils.<sup>2</sup> Besides researching and planning future developments in the region, and formulating policy, it has, for instance, given grants to a theatre in Sunderland and to the Northern Sinfonia Orchestra (the only professional chamber orchestra in Great Britain), arranged major exhibitions, organized visits by national companies, and implemented award schemes for playwrights, painters, sculptors and writers. It has helped or created new projects: a Trades Unions Arts Festival, a centre for the reading and sale of poetry, a quarterly magazine, a film theatre, arts centres, and many other ventures. At the same time it has raised funds (increasing its income from £42,000 in 1961-63 to £185,000 in 1968-69), given artistic and administrative advice, and publicized events in the region through its monthly magazine, *Arts North*.

The association's income for 1968-69 was £185,000. The Arts Council grant was 46 per cent of this figure; contributions from industry, commerce and individuals made up 15 per cent; and local authorities the remaining 39 per cent, equivalent to an average contribution of three-sixteenths of a penny rate. The local authority contribution, though still disappointing, has been successfully maintained by the association, as its Director, Alexander Dunbar, told the Commons committee:

1. NAA memorandum in *Grants for the Arts*, p. 434.

2. Evidence by the Treasurer of Newcastle upon Tyne in *Grants for the Arts*, p. 442.

We have to ask them for contributions every year . . . it is noteworthy that even in this most difficult year [1968] only three have withdrawn . . . there has been an overall increase of 10 per cent. Therefore on balance I think we have made our point that in a time of economy support for the arts, which are generally regarded as the Cinderella of the estimates, should not be cut. We have maintained our own position. [p. 439]

There are many attractive features in the role and organization of NAA. It represents a move towards decentralization both financially—54 per cent of its budget is contributed from within the region—and by drawing closely on local advice and local strengths. Such associations, NAA has said

involve the regions in planning their future, provide a focus and forum for the expression of local initiative, provide a partnership between national and local, professional and amateur, management and labour, public and private enterprise, voluntary enthusiasts and full-time staff. [p. 436]

Following NAA's example, another six associations have been started in the sixties, and there are plans for more. Within the next five years the country may be covered by twelve to fifteen such bodies. NAA, which has argued that the Arts Council might

channel all its grants (except perhaps those to professional orchestras, repertory theatres and major festivals) through regional associations as they become established, thus decentralising support and freeing the Arts Council to concentrate on national problems, plans and priorities. [p. 437]

has published a useful pamphlet, *Notes of Guidance on the Formation of a Regional Arts Association*.<sup>1</sup>

Not everyone is yet convinced of the advantages of such associations. The Chairman of the Scottish Arts Council has said

so far we have not felt that an arts association would be of help . . . everyone who gets involved in that way is apt to have a claim on what should be done. Sometimes what they want done is not exactly what one might wish for if one is to maintain and improve standards. But certainly our minds are completely open on this. [p. 214-15]

The Director of the Midlands Arts Centre for Young People has remarked that these regional associations to be effective will have to think in terms of millions of pounds. The situation might be quite different if we ever get regional government. However, it is an almost impossible association of bedfellows. I cannot imagine, for instance, the Belgrade Theatre, the Birmingham Repertory Theatre and ourselves . . . sitting happily alongside the little musical society . . . I think the difficulty is that only the professional bodies tend to belong to the regional arts associations. [p. 174]

(The last contention is denied by NAA's director.)

Yet the emergence of flourishing regional arts associations is crucial to any consideration of the arts in Great Britain over the next two decades. The Commons committee thought

1. Published in 1968 by NAA, 24 Northumberland Road, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 8JY, at 1s. 6d.

a decision on regional development in the context of Arts Council development . . . the most important single decision the Arts Council will have to take in the next five to ten years. [p. xli-xlii]

The Arts Council's attitudes towards advance planning are discussed in the final chapter.

#### *British Broadcasting Corporation*

The BBC's enormous contribution to the arts in Great Britain will be mentioned again and again in this report. Like the Arts Council, the BBC is an autonomous organization appointed by Royal Charter, and is in no way directly responsible to Parliament or subject to government control—a fact not always understood outside Great Britain. Its income is derived from annual licence fees which, paid into a general fund, are in large part then granted to the BBC by the Treasury.

BBC support for the arts in Great Britain is (a recent BBC document points out)<sup>1</sup> exercised through or in the context of broadcasting. To exercise it in ways unrelated to broadcasting and broadcasting needs might be seen, under a strict interpretation, as a misuse of licence money and a contravention of the Charter. In any case, the BBC has always been of the opinion that the most valuable form of support, and the one most appreciated by the artist, is to provide employment, which involves payment for work and the opportunity to reach an audience. But it can, and does, contribute in other ways, notably in encouragement and training of new talent, in concert promotion, and in the reaching of mutually beneficial arrangements with the promoters of festivals, concerts, and other public performances.

Sir William Haley, then BBC Director-General, said in 1948:<sup>2</sup>

In any art, Broadcasting's first duty is to the art in the abstract. Next it is to the art within the community. Lastly it is to the practitioners of the art . . . Broadcasting has a duty to strengthen the practice of art within the community, but never to the point of excluding its duty to the art itself . . . Broadcasting must encourage the young, keep filled the pool of talent, and generally so arrange its patronage that it draws, not only upon the masters of today, but trains by use and experience the masters of tomorrow. The conflict here is a straightforward one between this responsibility and the duty always to provide the best.

Or as Sir Hugh Greene, Director-General in 1966, then said:<sup>3</sup>

It is important for the national culture that the broadcasters should show wisdom in their disposition of the great funds that reach them from the public so as to make possible the widest encouragement of cultural potential.

The BBC—particularly with regard to music—plays a major and indispensable role in the over-all British pattern.

1. *The BBC and the Arts*, p. 5, London, BBC, 1968.

2. Lewis Fry Memorial Lectures, Bristol.

3. Address to the Association for Literature and Art, Duisburg, 1966.

# The training and patronage of artists

In this chapter we review briefly British training schools for artists and arts administrators; and discuss some problems and sources of patronage to individual artists.

## Training schools

Few people believe artistic geniuses can be produced by education. But education can make the emergence of many talented artists easier; by providing an encouraging cultural climate rather than one opposed or indifferent to art, and by providing time in which talent may develop. By a democratic spread of educational opportunity we can attempt to guard against the inhibition of competent artists by uncongenial circumstances, and perhaps draw out the 'mute inglorious Milton's'.

The encouragement and development of creativity, though obviously an important aim and by-product of the training schools, is not the main ground for their existence. The establishment of separate, autonomous training schools for particular arts was motivated by the desire and need to produce qualified craftsmen and performers. But in the past few years, particularly since the considerable increase in student numbers at these schools, questions have been asked both within the schools and outside them about the content of their courses, and about the kinds of skills which they develop. Certainly the schools have a diversity, and perhaps sometimes a confusion, of aims. At the moment the schools may provide specialized applied training (in, say the industrial design courses of some art schools), offer a general liberal education in the fine arts, music or drama, or train teachers. And they may be used as inexpensive finishing schools for middle-class girls with artistic leanings. A social justification can be made for all these kinds of work, but particularly in the art schools, a sense of common identity and purpose often seems to have been lost.

Throughout Great Britain there are colleges and training schools for training in architecture, music, art, drama and other related arts. Some are the responsibility of local education authorities; others are privately run. Grants for students to attend these institutions can be awarded by their Local Education Authorities; but not all authorities make grants for artistic training as readily as for other forms of education,

and the anomalies and occasional inconsistencies of this system are real sources of anxiety. The National Union of Students recently urged, in evidence to the Coldstream Committee which is currently reviewing the structure of art education, that a central grants body should be established for art students.<sup>1</sup>

There are numerous schools of visual art throughout Great Britain. In 1960 the Congress for Cultural Freedom report, *Short Survey of the Situation of Artists in England: Visual Arts*<sup>2</sup> commented:

The education given in the English Schools of Art seems more open-minded than that of the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris. There is no sacrifice, it is true of any of the traditional elements of instruction in the craft, but students in their last year are allowed a fairly wide liberty. Among the instructors are young and advanced artists.

Nearly all English Artists who have achieved fame, mention in any record of their lives the courses they followed at one or another school.

There have recently been a number of tensions within the art schools.<sup>3</sup> The National Advisory Council on Art Education worked out a streamlined and more academic structure for art education, providing a broader education in the liberal university tradition, to replace the system that had evolved from a craft-oriented structure. But the need to raise the academic standards of fine-art education to university level—achieved through the creation of a new three-year Diploma in Art and Design within the art schools—led to a fear that this took art education more towards the traditionally verbal emphases of English higher education and away from the distinctive visual-tactile-emotional bases of art education. One of the complaints voiced in the student protests at art schools in 1968, was that the specialization involved in the courses for the Dip. A.D. prevented students from getting a broad visual education. Other students taking vocational courses complained that their courses had no connexion with the industrial situations they were supposedly being trained for. Both categories of student objected to the rigid predetermination of syllabuses in art education, and wanted the colleges to establish a self-directing system in which the student could use his own initiative. The issue of the breaking down of divisions in art education between 'fine arts' and 'design' has been basic. The demand for this often comes from 'multimedia' type experimentalists—artists trained in the fine arts who now create environments, working with what are basically 'design' type materials (welded sculpture, moving paintings and so on). Hence the wish of students at the Hornsey school to replace the separate departments with a 'network' system.<sup>4</sup>

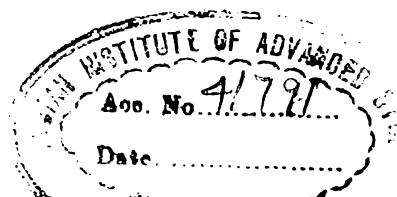
There are a number of theatre schools in Britain—London's Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, and London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art are well-known, and there are other schools in the provinces. An increasing number of universities

1. Reported in the *Daily Telegraph*, 10 December 1968.

2. By Ruby D'Arschot and Raymonde Moulin under the direction of Nicolas Nabakov, II/3G, p. 2-3.

3. For an illuminating discussion, see *The Hornsey Affair*, by staff and students of Hornsey College of Art. Harmondsworth, 1969.

4. *ibid.*



now have drama departments, offering first- and second-degree courses, sometimes with work in television included.

The growing number of drama schools range from highly professional and responsible institutions to some which are seriously ill equipped.

There are as yet no required standards of teaching which can be applied to these schools, and, apart from inspections by H.M. Inspectorate of those schools which have applied to be added to the list of further education establishments recognized as efficient by DES, the only check on their activities arises in connexion with the willingness of local education authorities to recognize a school as one in respect of which they will make grants to students.

Some of the larger schools are partly financed by trust funds, but all are dependent for their existence on student fees and some take more than they can adequately instruct. The more responsible schools have a high drop-out rate, the less responsible throw badly trained actors into the profession.

In addition, fifteen Colleges of Further Education (receiving support from central government funds via the rate support grant) offer one-year or two-year courses of drama which in some cases have been advertised as pre-drama school courses. (The Commons committee recommended against this,<sup>1</sup> and DES has drawn the attention of local education authorities to the risk of misleading students if courses are so treated and presented as implying a direct vocational link with the drama schools.) A considerable number of people, of course, still become actors simply by finding a job and applying for membership in Equity, the actors' union.

The result has been serious underemployment. It is estimated that at any one time 90 per cent of the acting profession is out of work and that the average actor works less than one week in two.

In the same way, there are numerous independent schools of music (though of a higher average standard than the drama schools), and some university departments of music. There are also schools linked to the major opera and ballet companies.

Page 59 of the PEP report, *Sponsorship of Music* (1966), noted:

It is difficult to assess how many music students do not enter the profession after leaving college, and virtually impossible to give their reasons for not doing so. There is little doubt that any ex-student of high enough calibre can get a job, particularly if he is a string player prepared to join one of the major orchestras. There is however, equally little doubt that too few of these are available and that musicians whose standards could be raised after they leave college have little opportunity for doing this.

The Council for the Encouragement of Musical Performance met for the first time in February 1965. Its main function is to consider and recommend ways of providing opportunities for musicians to gain experience in performance. A useful example is the BBC's training orchestra based in Bristol. Young musicians of sufficient merit are given engagements of up to three years during which they receive intensive coaching and practical training, besides giving concerts. There is no obligation to stay with the corporation.

1. *Grants for the Arts*, p. ix.

Two major criticisms of the present policies of music schools are repeatedly made: one is that the colleges tend to treat orchestral playing as a bad second best to performing as soloist, so that many ex-students feel themselves to have failed even on becoming players in major orchestras; secondly there is said to be little relationship between the requirements of the profession—usually for more string players—and the colleges' emphasis on different instruments. A witness told the Commons committee:

it was stated comparatively recently that there were in London alone 60 students of the clarinet who hoped to enter the profession, whereas in normal circumstances one would not require more than one or two a year. [p. 469]

There are no training schemes for writers in Great Britain, and courses in creative writing are not a feature of the British university. Some private correspondence colleges offer courses in writing and journalism, but their value and standards are variable, and the emphasis is journalistic. The report on helping the arts in Great Britain prepared by the Gulbenkian Foundation in 1959 recommended the establishment of a drama writing school, but none has been founded—though the BBC recently inaugurated, with immense success, one-day training seminars for would-be radio writers. The creative writer remains at a disadvantage in comparison with other artists not only in that there are no training schools (it may be, of course, as is often claimed, that there is no craft or technique which can be imparted) but in that he does not have a period of up to three years in which he may devote himself solely to his work.

It is possible to take courses in film appreciation at the Slade School of Fine Art (London University); and in film-making at the Royal College of Art, the Hornsey School of Art, and the London School of Film Technique. These may be three-year diploma or one-year post-graduate courses. They are a recent development, and consequently little useful evidence is available as to their practical value. The government has announced its decision to support a national film school of the highest standard, but there are no further details as yet. The likely future relationship between film-school graduates and the commercial industry (or television) remains obscure.

### **The training of arts administrators**

Changes in the function of the traditional means of spreading culture and the emergence of new agencies (the mass media, new facilities such as regional associations) have brought with them problems concerning the administration of cultural institutions. Regular, organized cultural action on the part of governments and local communities is something new, and it calls for competent administration. Similarly in the great private institutions (theatres, symphony orchestras, etc.) administrative work has become so complicated as to necessitate a new professionalism. Great Britain, until very recently, has been suspicious of the value of specially trained administrators. The suspicion is probably due to a distaste for bureaucracy, but its ironic result has been the appointment of non-artistic, non-specialist bureaucrats to positions of

authority in cultural matters. The possible alternatives for the future seem to be either to provide training in cultural affairs for young graduates and management trainees, or to give artists themselves courses in administration.

A one-year intensive training scheme on 'The Administration of the Arts', arranged by the Polytechnic School of Management Studies, London, in conjunction with the Arts Council, began with sixteen students in September 1967. The Arts Council, in collaboration with the Council of Repertory Theatres, also operates a one-year training scheme in theatre administration.

### Assistance to individual artistic creation

There are a variety of ways in which help can be provided for the living artist. But the problem of how the potential painter, composer, dramatist or novelist exists before his work is accepted and paid for, has hardly yet been considered in England.<sup>1</sup>

C. Day Lewis, as Chairman of the Literature Panel, wrote in the twenty-first report of the Arts Council:<sup>2</sup>

I myself do not believe that the young writer, however talented, should have things made too easy for him. A period of struggle, adversity, discouragement, is a good test of his vocation, his integrity and his stamina (early success is a stern test of integrity, too). It is when he has passed this test that any help we can give him may well be timely.

Despite the vigorous severity of this attitude, the principle of some sort of patronage does exist. 'One of the main objectives of the Government's policy is to encourage the living artist', the 1965 White Paper, *A Policy for the Arts*,<sup>3</sup> declared, and announced the raising of subsidies by the Arts Council from £10,000 to £50,000.

Great Britain has never had the widespread patronage of the arts that has been known by some European countries. But the State has gradually accepted its responsibilities of patronage; and the case for the necessity of patronage (something distinct from its provision in practice) rarely has to be argued now. The sort of patronage to be exercised requires, none the less, constant debate. The methods adopted should be such as to

secure the freedom of the creative artist, while at the same time giving him the place he should have in economic and social life.<sup>4</sup>

At the same time, the patron has to achieve a balance between providing support for the tried and established artist (who may well not be financially independent), and the new, innovative and experimental work by the perhaps unknown practitioner.

The Congress for Cultural Freedom's *Short Survey of the Situation of the Artists in England: Visual Arts* (1960) estimated that of the 40,000 painters and artists in

1. For a valuable discussion of the writer's financial problems, see *Money in Writing*, special issue of the *Times Literary Supplement*, 24 July 1969.

2. *Key Year*, 1965-66, p. 16.

3. Paragraph 83.

4. *Cultural Policy: A Preliminary Study*, 2nd. ed. rev., p. 18, Paris, Unesco, 1969.

Great Britain (the highest number estimated), only thirty or so lived by their painting. In 1968, Maurice Bradshaw, the secretary of the Federation of British Artists, estimated that there are over 100,000 trained artists in Great Britain today, 46,000 art students in art school, and thousands of would-be professionals, of whom only fifty were fully employed in painting and sculpting. The Arts Council in its first twenty years, up to 1966, spent over £100,000 in purchases of art and over £600,000 on exhibitions in Great Britain—a valuable, but insufficient, expenditure. 'State patronage, though of recent date, has some encouraging results to show, but the sums advanced are below the level of needs', the CCF report stated.<sup>1</sup> The Arts Council spent only £1,400 on bursaries for artists in 1967-68.

But even those artists who sell their work rarely achieve an adequate financial reward. When paintings appreciate in value, the profits go not to the artists but to the owner of the work. Ways of returning some of this money to the artists are currently being considered. One plan would involve creating machinery, with Unesco co-operation, under the aegis of the International Association of Art in Paris. Painters and sculptors would register their work with this bureau, through a representative body in Great Britain. On the first sale of a work of art the purchaser would agree in writing that if he resold the work at a profit, 10 per cent of this profit would go to the bureau. Of this, 8 per cent would go as royalties to the artist and to his heirs for fifty years after his death, and 2 per cent would be retained for administration costs.

The taxation system is unsatisfactory to both writers and painters. There have recently been, however, some improvements. Following representations by the Arts Council and the Society of Authors acting jointly, by Section 17 of the 1967 Finance Act an author of a ten-year-old work may now spread forwards over six years any lump sum he then receives for it. This is a further alleviation of the copyright sale position, although the principle of regarding such a sale as a capital transaction (and so not subject to tax) has not yet been attained. The writer may also spread back for tax purposes lump sum payments and royalties receivable during two years after the date of first publication or performance of a work, so redistributing the income over the period in which the work was being done. A similar concession to painters and sculptors was announced in the Budget speech of 15 April 1969. None the less the system is still not a happy one. Anthony Burgess announced that he was leaving England because:

this year . . . I shall be paid reasonable sums for the film rights of two books and moderate fees for making screenplays out of those books. This is not likely to happen again: I accept the good fortune as a reward for a number of years of very hard work, with hardly any weekends off, and—under a reasonable tax system—I should be able to spread that money retrospectively, thus easing the tax burden.<sup>2</sup>

In 1965 the Society of Authors commissioned Research Services Ltd. to conduct a survey of its 3,240 members to establish what sort of income they received. The

1. *Short Survey of the Situation of the Artists in England: Visual Arts*, p. 11. Congress for Cultural Freedom, 1960.

2. *Weekend Telegraph*, 27 September 1968.

results were published in 1966 by the society in a pamphlet, *The Book Writers—Who Are They?*, by Richard Findlater. Of the 1,587 writers who filled in the questionnaire, a little over half were primarily concerned with authorship, and a little under half ranked writing as a secondary job. Of the first group 56 per cent earned over £500 a year from their writing, 44 per cent under. Of the second group 26 per cent earned over £500 a year from their writing, 74 per cent under. Only one sixth of all writers surveyed earned over £20 per week (£1,050 a year). The members of the Society of Authors are 'not novices and hacks, but educated and experienced writers, each with a number of books to his or her credit', Findlater points out.<sup>1</sup>

The Society of Authors puts more value on proper payment, fairer taxation and safeguards for rights, than on patronage. The campaign for a Public Lending Right, which the society pressed for some time, has now been taken over by the Arts Council's Literature Panel.<sup>2</sup>

The Public Lending Right is analogous to the established Performing Right which provides that when a piece of music is publicly performed or broadcast, its composer receives a fee. *The Arts Council and Public Lending Right*, a summary of the council's Working Party on the Public Lending Right, transmitted to DES, was published in January 1968. It proposes that the Secretary of State for Education and Science should establish a Library Compensation Fund Committee to administer the proposed funds. The size of the annual grant should be related to the total annual expenditure of public library authorities on books. Payments to authors and publishers would depend on stocks held in the public libraries in each year of the works written and published by them. Figures of library usage would be compiled from a sample consisting of the stock figures compiled by the public libraries of one Greater London authority library, one county authority, and one provincial city library. (Separate samplings would be necessary for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.)

The Public Lending Right campaign, still continuing—and still unsuccessful—has been carried on for some years. But there is no organized policy covering the photocopying machines now widespread in libraries, schools and universities. A way of restoring some money to the owners of the copyright of materials copied may need to be devised. Profits from these machines at present return directly to the corporation leasing them. A built-in recording device would provide some control on those copying copyright material; a levy on the profits of those machines used in this way (as opposed to those used for merely office copying) might at least help finance the library compensation fund.

The Society of Authors has viewed with dismay the new copyright legislation for underdeveloped countries, by which works of an educational, scientific and cultural nature would be exempted from copyright payments. Few writers would want to hinder the development of education and culture in new nations; on the other hand it seems inequitable that copyright holders should receive nothing at all. The same waiving

1. Richard Findlater, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

2. See the Arts Council Report, 1967-68, *Changes and Moves*, p. 24-5.

of royalties has noticeably not been applied to patents, industrial formulae, or other commercial properties. To waive copyright payments was a fine gesture of the governments represented at the Stockholm conference: it would have been finer had the governments compensated the authors whose property they were giving away. (Though several countries—including Britain—have not ratified the agreement.)

Such reports as that of the Congress for Cultural Freedom on visual artists and of the Society of Authors on writers, show clearly the financially poor position of artists and writers, and reports on practitioners in the other arts would be useful in a field where general statements are common but facts few. That there is room for patronage, the reports clearly demonstrate. But, as Richard Findlater pointed out:<sup>1</sup>

Up till 1965 the writer could look for little help from Whitehall or Westminster: indeed only a tiny annual dole was provided by public funds—and only about £18,000 from all sources in prizes, grants and pensions.

With the increased money available as a result of the Labour Government's policy, new measures were proposed. The Poetry Panel of the Arts Council became the Literature Panel, concerning itself also with prose. And the policy of assistance was revised and expanded. At an international weekend conference at Ditchley Park in Oxfordshire in July 1967, the Secretary-General of the Arts Council said he had been specially interested to learn that the Canada Council spent a much greater proportion of its grant on awards to individuals than the British Arts Council—in fact, between 30 and 40 per cent. He also thought British selection methods amateurish in comparison with those used in Canada.

A noticeable feature of the new sorts of patronage offered by the Arts Council is the number of bursaries to individual artists. In 1967-68 the council awarded to writers in England nineteen bursaries (totalling £19,800), twenty-nine maintenance grants, three grants to translators and two grants to publishers. In Scotland the council awarded eight bursaries, and one travel and research grant. In Wales the council awarded nine bursaries. The general expenditure on literature was £63,103: of this £61,479 was allocated in grants and guarantees, and £1,624 on the Poetry Library (now open to the general public) and miscellaneous expenses. The council has also arranged, with a good deal of success, tours by groups of writers who read their own works and discuss them with a variety of audiences.

The increase in the expenditure is remarkable, excellent and overdue. Whether the council is using its larger funds in the best way for literature, is arguable. Certainly the award of bursaries to individuals has much to recommend it over the previous policy of offering patronage almost exclusively to the communal arts. The difficulties of administering bursary schemes are, however, considerable. The problems of directing awards to the most worthy people, the problems of evaluating who are the most worthy, the dangers of awarding, or seeming to award, predominantly to members of certain coteries, all these make the scheme difficult to run, and vulnerable to

1. Richard Findlater, *op. cit.*, p. 14, 1966.

continued criticism. The centring of the Arts Council on London may make the awards suspect to the artist living in the provinces, not without justification. Patronage of individuals is always open to the charges of nepotism, establishment preferences, and so on. The council's Chairman regards the question of support to writers as 'a highly experimental matter'.

The Arts Council awarded three prizes in England and one in Scotland in 1967-68 (totalling £4,000) to writers. The Society of Authors administers seven prizes and others are administered by trusts and other bodies. Valuable as prizes may be, they do not provide the security or predictable aid that is necessary for some kinds of composition. Nor are the rewards high compared with American prizes. The highest literary awards in Great Britain are the Booker Award and the Churchill Literary Award (£5,000). Some of the most appealing were not awarded in 1968 (the Churchill Award, the Heinemann Corgi Columbia Award for £4,000, the Peter Owen Award for £1,000) and none of the British prizes carries the prestige of such French awards as the Prix Goncourt, which guarantees an automatic print order of 50,000. The normal sum offered in Great Britain of £200-£300 is not much reward for a minimum of one or two years' work.

If life is not easy for the writer or visual artist in Great Britain, it often looks insupportable for someone wanting to work in cinema. The British Film Institute has now begun to award grants for the making of short feature films. But because of the expense of film-making, such grants are few, and do not go a long way. The film-maker is probably in the worst position for receiving bursaries or subsidies of any artist in Great Britain, and lacks adequate possibilities for getting his work commercially distributed; just as the film enthusiast's opportunities for seeing film in Great Britain are far fewer than the opportunities for lovers of music or literature to experience their arts. Lindsay Anderson, the director of *This Sporting Life* and *If* was reported as saying:

People ask why don't I make more films. But the question is irresponsible. It means that the questioners won't answer it for themselves. They want me to say I'm suffering from some sort of perversion, or that I've got a wooden leg. But, in fact, they already know that while there's a huge pool of film-making talent in Britain, it's the worst possible system in which to actually make films.<sup>1</sup>

At the time of writing, it has been reported that the government is to put further money into the National Film Finance Corporation, which has lost £5.2 million of its original £6 million in twenty years. The Associated British Picture Corporation is to launch an extensive British film-making programme.

### Other sources of patronage

The role of the bodies reviewed in the previous chapter is of primary importance. But some other sources deserve comment.

1. *Sunday Times*, 3 November 1968.

Though it is in all these cases impossible to gain even minimal information at present, the size of private industry's contribution is particularly obscure. In 1963 Sir Kenneth Clark, invited to address the annual conference of the Institute of Directors, asked 'What has capitalist society done for art in this country?' and replied: 'Very little'. (Compare John Ruskin's attacks on the attitude of industrialists.)<sup>1</sup> The institute's reaction was to ask Sir William Emrys Williams, former Arts Council Secretary-General, to advise them on methods of commissioning works of art. Already a number of exhibitions have been held, and though the current economic situation offers little encouragement, Sir William's brief review of industrial patronage for the select committee<sup>2</sup> estimates in extremely general terms (no figures exist) that industry may spend £1.25 million each year on general support (in programme advertisements, support for festivals and dramatic societies)<sup>3</sup> and £1.5 million on the purchase of works of art. In 1966 an Artist Placement Group<sup>4</sup> was formed to act as intermediary between artists and industry. But since many firms contribute anonymously to the arts little is known in this field.

Not many requests for living art come from the Church. But university college chapels have purchased works by Epstein and other sculptors, new churches provide an opportunity for competitive architectural design and, for example, the new Coventry Cathedral contains a magnificent range of artistic work. On the whole the Church gives a fairly low priority to the arts, and its role in artistic patronage is peripheral or tangential.

Though Resolution 42 of the Trades Union Congress, 1960, called for a special examination to ensure greater participation by the trade union movement in all cultural activities, their record remains extremely thin. But NAA's Director told the Commons committee:

it is not their money we want so much as their organisation and contacts and the moral support they give us. One or two of the trade union members on my executive committee are really worth their weight in gold. They as people and the contacts they have are far more valuable than the £5 or £10 a union might give us . . . It was they who brought the audience along to 'Close the Coalhouse Door' at the Newcastle Playhouse, and they ran their own trades union festival three years ago, the first of its kind in the country. [p. 439]

Trusts make invaluable contributions. The Gulbenkian Foundation gave £150,000 to theatres in Great Britain between 1959 and 1965. The Nuffield Foundation subsidized the building of the University of Southampton theatre. The Society of Authors was responsible for founding, and now administers, the Phoenix Trust which is endowed with wide powers to support literary and artistic effort and research. The Winston Churchill Memorial Trust offers travelling fellowships to the arts, including writers. But trusts have not hitherto played a large part in supporting writers in

1. See, for instance, *The Two Paths* (1859) or *The Crown of Wild Olive* (1866).

2. *Grants for the Arts*, p. 574.

3. For example, the L. G. Harris brush company organizes an annual festival at Bromsgrove, Worcestershire.

4. 22 Portland Road, London, W.11.

Great Britain, unlike the situation in the United States where, as Walter Allen wrote: 'they are applied for as a matter of course; they have become an essential part of American literary life'.<sup>1</sup> Yet, as was noted on page 78 of the report to the Gulbenkian Foundation :

Unlike public bodies, trusts are accountable to themselves only. They give decisions but do not have to give reasons. This gives them a freedom of which they should make the fullest use.

The universities' contribution to the arts is particularly disappointing. The visual arts are badly neglected since the universities offer few departments of fine arts, and those are usually severely academic and historical in orientation. There are, admittedly, a few creative arts fellowships attached to the universities—at Lancaster, York, Leeds and Keele for instance. But these are too few, and those that exist are not always used to best advantage. The Chair of Poetry at Oxford could be used as an expression of faith by the university in the contemporary artist; but the procedure of election and some of the candidates proposed reduce the Chair to the farcical. The Arts Council, which administers a legacy providing the Compton Poetry Fund, awarded a Compton Lectureship for three years to the University of Hull; the first lecturer is C. Day Lewis, Poet Laureate and former chairman of the council's Literature Panel. Most writers employed in British universities must produce their work in time stolen from academic commitments.<sup>2</sup> In this respect, departments of literature, particularly, might be reminded that, important as their concern for preserving the heritage of the past may be, there is a continuum between established works safe for study, and work being created at the moment. Some sense of the vitality of literature, some sense that the creation of literature is going on now and did not stop in 1880 or 1910 or (exceptionally) 1950, some realization that practising writers have something to give to the study of literature, would both revitalise the academic departments, suffering at the moment from a loss of faith and direction, and support and encourage the creation of contemporary literature.

The contribution of private individuals is a matter of speculation. Most help, probably, is given by posthumous contributions to, or the establishment of, trusts and foundations. NAA has 'not to a great extent' received individuals' help:

one has been surprised by the number of people whom one would think could not really afford it but who do give us some help. But we lack millionaires in the northern region . . . [p. 442]

1. *The Author*, Winter 1965.

2. See the symposium on 'The Writer in the University', *ALTA*, The University of Birmingham Review, January 1969.

# Traditional media and institutions for the appreciation and dissemination of the arts

We briefly sketch here some recent developments in the traditional fields of education, libraries, museums and galleries, publishing, theatre and music.

## **Education**

As has been shown, the links between the Arts Council and DES are an attempt to co-ordinate support for the arts with the encouragement of the arts among school-children. 'We are committed to raising a generation of children who will enjoy first-class art as no generation has enjoyed it before', said the Government Leader in the House of Lords.<sup>1</sup>

Here the main effort, if also the least publicized, has gone into the steady transformation of primary schools (especially) into places where all the arts are taken both 'seriously' and naturally, so that the arts are neither 'subjects' among others nor a special and reserved area of experience. Painting and sculpture, perhaps largely from the original stimulus of Sir Herbert Read's books on art in education, have never before played so large a part in primary schools.

At the secondary-school level (that is, schools for children over eleven), efforts are being made to change the teaching of English and to encourage participation through writing and an increased emphasis on contemporary literature, rather than by learning outmoded 'rules of grammar' or by the exclusive study of classic texts often very remote from the experience of the children. Themes, rather than books, are often studied, to include a wide variety of written matter—from war propaganda, say, to the poems of Wilfred Owen. This movement is beginning to impinge upon important public examinations around the age of 15. An illuminating book on such developments is John Dixon's *Growth through English*.<sup>2</sup>

Some theatre companies have inaugurated imaginative schemes to attract children into the theatre. The Oxford Playhouse Company has started an extremely

1. 19 April 1967.  
2. Oxford, 1969.

well-received competition in which school-children submit project-work based on plays in the current repertoire. The Birmingham Repertory Theatre has a Theatre 67 Club to which children belong and may watch the company rehearse, or see aspects of stage management, on Saturdays. (Though this has not yet produced any feedback into audiences for adult or more difficult plays.) The Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, gives every school-leaver in the city a voucher to see a play free. On arrival the boy or girl is given a two-in-one ticket (allowing a free seat if a friend is brought and paid for) for a future performance.

The universities, and particularly the new universities, have developed some drama departments and often house handsome theatres. But on the whole their support for the arts is expressed through the academic study of literature, music, to a lesser extent the fine arts, but almost never cinema. Traditional adult-education courses, provided by the Workers' Educational Association and by the extra-mural departments of universities, have attracted record enrolments over the last few years; but they are allowed to offer only a very restricted number of classes in the practice of the arts. The emphasis remains conventionally academic. It is worth recalling J. F. C. Harrison's comments on the British adult education movement in his excellent history:

it has been in the main regarded as a movement for freedom and liberation, both personal (in the sense of widening horizons) and social . . . it has been an earnest, serious affair; there has been comparatively little of the 'learning for leisure' approach and a great deal of emphasis on striving and struggle by people who had very little leisure. Lastly, adult education has reached out to a minority of the people only; it has been, in several senses, an élite movement.<sup>1</sup>

There have been two other innovations, of great importance. The pioneering Midlands Arts Centre for Young People is described below. The other is the 'Open University', planned to start in January 1971, which will enable ordinary and honours degrees to be earned through the use of courses on television and radio.

The way towards the Open University had already been pioneered by the foundation at Cambridge in 1965 of the National Extension College whose work included linked radio and television correspondence courses in the most popular subjects for public examinations. The Open University will eventually provide professional and 'refresher' courses in addition to a variety of degree courses. Its enrolment fees, which are envisaged as a main source of its income (there are to be no formal academic enrolment qualifications whatever), will include correspondence lessons, books, the services of a tutor in the immediate area who will mark the student's work and see him or her from time to time, and where possible access to rooms in schools and libraries for viewing special programmes on the BBC's ultra-high frequency second channel, BBC 2.

Such a university's contribution to the arts will be indirect; but, especially as degree courses are to follow the open, experimental pattern of American and Scottish first degrees and not the highly specialized courses of English universities—foundation courses must be taken from a range of four areas (understanding science; mathe-

1. J. F. C. Harrison, *Learning and Living, 1790-1960*, p. xiv, London, 1961.

matics; understanding society; literature and civilization)—the ways in which music, literature and other arts could be presented to a new audience, which will have deliberately and voluntarily chosen to take part, are virtually limitless.<sup>1</sup> In this way a great many people who, had opportunities existed, might have gone to university, will gain a recognized qualification at a high level. Perhaps more important is the likelihood that many casual viewers will find the programmes of interest.

### Libraries

Lending libraries of various kinds have existed in Great Britain for centuries. The establishment of the distinctive municipal libraries and museums followed the Public Libraries Acts of 1850, 1892 and 1919 and the Museums and Gymnasiums Act, 1891, which were major pieces of public educational and cultural legislation. The Roberts Report on the Structure of the Public Library Service in England and Wales, 1959, showed that many were in a very poor state and the resultant legislation, the Public Libraries and Museums Act, 1964, established machinery to remedy this. Libraries are administered by local authorities (mainly county and borough councils) but the Secretary of State for Education and Science has a duty to ensure that they provide an efficient and comprehensive library service. The Act set up two library advisory councils for England and Wales and library advisers have been appointed. In considering the adequacy of their service, library authorities must have regard to the Report on Standards of Public Library Service of a working party set up in preparation for the 1964 Act. The recommendations of this working party are wide ranging and have to be judged in the light of local circumstances. Although not mandatory the existence of these standards and the provisions of the 1964 Act have resulted in improvements of service.

Public libraries have responded to new social circumstances in various ways: mobile libraries serve rural areas; special departments in city libraries are devoted to technical and commercial information and to local history and music; and local cultural activities are often based on public libraries. There is frequently close liaison with school and college libraries. A nation-wide interlibrary lending service has been developed, as have specialized services such as hospital libraries and library service for the house-bound. Books in braille and recorded books are made available locally through national organizations and books in large type are stocked for the partially sighted. Records of music and the spoken word are increasingly provided and to a lesser extent picture loan collections. Old buildings are being converted to lighter, freer, open-plan design and new branch and central libraries are appearing, though the freeze on local authority expenditure has delayed some plans for new libraries.

In December 1968 the two library advisory councils presented their report on the supply and training of librarians. At the moment there are fourteen schools of librarianship in England and Wales, and the report concludes that there are enough

1. See an article by John Ferguson in *The Times Literary Supplement*, 17 July 1969.

students in training to fill the jobs available. The new problem concerns standards rather than numbers. The two major problems are of attracting more men, and more graduates (especially science graduates) into libraries. In 1967 only 28.2 per cent of all student librarians were men. Since on average women librarians serve in the profession for only four years before marrying, there is a problem of continuity. On the second issue, of students finishing librarianship courses in 1967 only 28 per cent were graduates, and only 3.7 per cent science graduates. With the increase in academic and specialized libraries the public libraries need to compete for more highly qualified staff. In this connexion new training programmes are now being introduced to enable libraries better to meet their changing roles.

### Museums and galleries; preservation and display

In a period of rapid technological and cultural change, the preservation and attractive display of the cultural heritage remains a vital part of any cultural policy. It would be hard to distinguish under the wide heading of 'preservation' the specifically cultural, scientific, and historical; and undesirable to do so. The 'cultural' is not to be hived off from other areas in life. Some areas of preservation can be seen as perhaps predominantly historical. The invaluable work being done by local records offices in preserving parish registers, wills and so on (far less often, films and tapes) falls in this area. Responsibility for setting up such offices rests with the local authorities, and not all are equally willing to bear the cost. Alongside these must be mentioned the distinguished tradition of provincial historical and archaeological societies, often operating now in association with the Historical Manuscripts Commission.

In addition to the preservation of artefacts and records there exists the special problem of the preservation of folk-cultures, pursued in various ways, and with various degrees of success, throughout the country. Amateurs devoted to the preservation of the traditional morris dancing are active in Oxfordshire; more formally the York cycle of mystery plays is performed triennially at York. Thanks to the pioneering efforts of such men as Cecil Sharp, much of the heritage of folk-song in Great Britain was transcribed around the end of the nineteenth century and has provided a stimulus for composers such as Vaughan Williams and in more recent years been revived by groups of young folk-song enthusiasts. Within the folk-song revival of the last decade, attention has been directed also to the heritage of urban ballads, and much research has been done to attempt to record and document before extinction the ballads of nineteenth-century industrialism—ballads of the canal and railway workers, and the industrial cities.

The aim in Britain, as in many countries, is now no longer merely to preserve ancient monuments and sites, but to make them educational and tourist attractions. Such major monuments as Stonehenge (the property of the Ministry of Public Buildings and Works) and Avebury are major tourist attractions in Great Britain, and a vivid indication of the country's prehistory.

The work done by the National Trust (founded in 1895) is concerned largely

with the preservation of country houses and estates. The preservation of such houses has presented special difficulties. Good arguments can be made that they should be lived in, not preserved empty; to turn houses into museums, colleges, or conference centres is to alter their character. But the demand for privacy by the houses' occupants, and the demands of public accessibility by a public whose money has been used for renovation and preservation, are sometimes in conflict. Not all those properties subsidized by the Trust are always accessible to the public.

The Ministry of Public Buildings and Works gives substantial grants to the National Trust. But the trust relies largely on subscriptions and legacies. The *Daily Telegraph*<sup>1</sup> reported that the trust spent £233,000 more 'last year on maintaining and improving properties than it received in rents, endowments and admission fees'. Its spending was £ 1,844,000. The trust owns about 350,000 acres in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and some 200 houses of outstanding architecture of historical importance. It has also accepted covenants which protect against development a further 50,000 acres of beautiful land and many buildings. Over 2 million people (excluding members of the trust) visit National Trust houses and gardens each year.

Although the major body in the field of preservation, the National Trust is not the only one. Civic trusts exist in cities throughout Great Britain, and their concern is to preserve the architectural and visual nature of the environment. The Council for the Preservation of Rural England is concerned with building and landscape.

A number of local authorities exercise a positive attitude to preservation, but legislation alone cannot ensure preservation. In 1968 the 300-year-old Banbury cake shop was partly demolished before a provisional preservation order was placed on the building but the demolition achieved was such that the building could not be restored.

Of the seventeen national museums, government departments are responsible for three, and all except one of the others have trustees, usually appointed by the Prime Minister. Their annual purchase grants at the end of the quinquennium 1964/65 to 1968/69 totalled £859,000. For the year 1969/70 they will receive just over £1 million; the annual grants thereafter are under consideration. The sharp rise in prices has imposed severe strains on the museums' purchasing grants.

In December 1968 a British Museum Society was started, as the basis of an attempt to gain supporters and funds for a major expansion programme. Initially it has aimed to attract about 400 distinguished names as founder members. But subscriptions to the society have been put deliberately low, and no money will be made out of the subscriptions. Lord Eccles (who became Chairman of the board of trustees in February 1968) was reported as saying:

As we raise the standard of education and increase the number of people who want to know about the arts and who have the transport facilities available to come and see the Museum, so we have got to meet their demands. We hope the society will help them to share in the great riches the Museum has to offer.<sup>2</sup>

1. 4 December 1968.

2. *Sunday Times*, 8 December 1968.

The formation of the society is obviously important for the achievement of the British Museum's aims—priorities are for a permanent exhibition gallery (still lacking) and more room for staff. Lack of space means that 94 per cent of the Museum's ethnographical material remains hidden. A preliminary report of a survey to instigate possible places for expansion was completed at the end of 1968. But the formation of the society was a significant step also in the acceptance of a changed relationship to the public, in keeping with changing cultural demands.

Provincial museums and galleries do not receive direct financial assistance from the government but they are eligible to apply for grants towards the cost of approved acquisitions from funds administered by the Victoria and Albert Museum and the Royal Scottish Museum; £102,000 is available for this purpose in 1969/70. Grants are also made to the area museum councils in England, Wales and Scotland, towards the costs of co-operative schemes such as conservation, display and exhibitions, by local museums and art galleries. Provincial museums and galleries are mainly the responsibility of the local authorities, and in general very little money is spent on them. The Museums Association has raised the question of the eligibility of museums and art galleries for capital grants offered through the Arts Council to arts centres, but the council has stated that no responsibility can be accepted for the housing of permanent collections or for any museum exhibition galleries. However, it was subsequently agreed that art galleries, and other bodies having a similar function, could qualify for capital grants towards the provision of facilities of an arts centre nature, temporary exhibition galleries and ancillary lecture rooms.

In its report<sup>1</sup> the Museums Association stated:

Developments during the year have indicated the need for close examination of the potential national and regional aid to the museum service, and for a reassessment of the responsibility of central and local government in this respect. The Legal Branch of the DES is preparing a new model set of bye-laws for use in museums, and it is hoped that this indicates an awareness of the need for separate legislation for museums and art galleries, as recommended in both the Roberts and the Rosse reports, no longer linking them with libraries.

In addition to their display of their permanent holdings, many provincial museums and galleries now participate in touring schemes. The Arts Council and the Victoria and Albert Museum have mounted a series of touring exhibitions of visual art and these are displayed in municipal galleries and art colleges. The possibility of using new media in the appreciation of painting and sculpture was first explored by the Arts Council in 1950, when an art film tour was launched. The council soon began to support the production of such films. At first only a token contribution was possible, due to the council's limited finances. In 1964-65, with the making of *Francis Bacon*, a special allocation for the production of new films was made for the first time, and in 1967-68 expenditure totalled £15,109. The council is now able—and prefers—to finance a production entirely, rather than participate in co-sponsorship.

The situation for the visual artist in the provinces is very unsatisfactory. There

1. *The Municipal Yearbook 1967*, London, Municipal Journal Ltd., 1967.

are few provincial galleries dealing in contemporary art. The municipal galleries, linked to museums, have little money for new purchases—but by participating in Arts Council tours and organizing network tours within their area, they do much to increase their activities.

### Publishing

A record number of titles was issued in 1968 by British publishers for the ninth successive year—a total of 31,420 books, including 22,642 new titles. In literature there were fewer reprints than in the previous year, but new titles brought the total increase to 149.

The movement towards larger and larger commercial units continues.<sup>1</sup> Smaller houses increasingly need to merge with, or are taken over by larger houses, which are in many cases American. Publishers are also being driven to seek capital from larger industrial sources—merchant banks, newspaper, television and printing firms. A combined pressure is developing on the one hand from commercial demands for 'rationalization' of production lines, quick returns and high turnover; on the other, from paperbacks which, originally liberators in providing cheap books for a wide readership, have become in their own way tyrannical. It is becoming almost obligatory for a novel to achieve paperback publication for its publication to be economically successful for its original publisher. The disadvantages of taking risks on new work are correspondingly high.

Great Britain is unfortunate in having almost no alternatives to this situation. The only State publishing house, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, confines itself to official reports and some historical studies. Nor are there many university presses—in comparison, at least, with American provision—while those that do exist have shown little interest in contemporary work (though Oxford has a good contemporary poetry list and its West Indian branch has published contemporary West Indian writing).

It may be that the Arts Council's expenditure on literature bursaries might better be diverted to the subsidy of new publishing ventures, or the further support of little magazines, whose decline has had considerable artistic repercussions. The BBC may well claim to be the only outlet of significant quantity for the short story in Britain, and the over-all position for the short-story writer is very difficult. The council's £2,000 subsidy for the year's twelve issues of the *London Magazine* (1967-68) is likely to have done far more for readers and writers than might the equivalent two or three bursaries. The position for the poet is more cheerful, because of a number of small presses prepared to publish verse in pamphlets.

Experiments are being made with new ideas (Hutchinson's 'New Authors' imprint, Macmillan's University First Novel £1,000 award) and new formats; Cape and *London Magazine* have both tried smaller formats, falling between hardback and paperback in price. For some publishing ventures Great Britain has considerable

1. Lists of the publishing houses in Great Britain are available in the *Writers and Artists Year Book* (London), and *Cassell's Directory of Publishing* (London).

advantages over such countries as, say, Sweden, by sharing a common language with America and the Commonwealth. This should result in some co-operation in publishing and the achievement of an economic run for a new author. In fact it rarely does, except in the case of large art books.

The paperback revolution in English publishing started over thirty years ago when Allen Lane began Penguin Book in 1935.<sup>1</sup> Paper-backed books were not unknown in Great Britain but they were generally pulp fiction. There were also some cheap intellectual series such as the Thinkers Library, and of course the Everyman's Library, founded by Ernest Rhys in 1906. What was new about Lane's venture was his policy of publishing reputable works in paperback, and of pricing them at 6d. a copy (which required 15,000 copies to be sold to break even), enabling them to be sold in chain stores such as Woolworth's. By exploiting such new outlets and by an enlightened editorial policy, Penguin Books became a success and were soon imitated in the United States and in Great Britain. They remain the premier English paperback house, maintaining high editorial standards. Pelican Books, their non-fiction series fulfil a valuable educational role of informative, intelligent studies, often specially commissioned.

In the early sixties there was a sudden boom in paperback publishing in Great Britain which resulted in temporary over-production, and consequently a number of firms merged or closed down or reduced their activities. But stability seems now to have been achieved again. Although the trade still depends mainly on the traditional bookseller, there are continual attempts to find new outlets in newsagents, supermarkets and so on. Shops devoted solely to paperbacks have existed in various cities for some years.

There has been considerable rethinking about the marketing of books and there is certainly room for change; 85 per cent of people in Great Britain never enter bookshops, and they can be put into contact with books only through other outlets.

One of the major problems for literature in Great Britain is that of book distribution. It needs urgent examination. We fully agree with the comments of Raymond Williams:<sup>2</sup>

Most towns in Britain are without an adequate independent bookshop. The distribution of books and magazines, outside a few fortunate centres, is in the hands of powerful chains of shops. These chains apply to books and magazines the simple test of quantity. Below a certain likely selling figure, they are not interested, and will not even offer the item for sale. The successful book or magazine will get around, but the book or magazine which might be bought, if it were available on anything like equal terms, will in most cases simply not be there. Even in paperbacks, where there is quite good distribution of the full range, there is increasing pressure towards the book that will sell quickly, so that there is no problem of holding stocks. If this situation is allowed to persist and develop, the real opportunities of the coming of cheap books will be missed.

An important part of all new work, in literature and opinion, appears at first in the independent reviews of 'little magazines'. We have a good range of such magazines, of all kinds,

1. See W. E. Williams, *The Penguin Story*, Harmondsworth, 1956.

2. Raymond Williams, *Britain in the Sixties: Communications*, p. 115-16, Harmondsworth, 1962.

but they have little chance with the chain shops. We simply do not know, until we have tried, what public these magazines might actually reach . . . There is need for a Books Council, simply to publish and review the facts. But I would like to see it go further. It should have the power, and the necessary capital grant, to set up real bookshops in the hundreds of places now served only by chains.

### Theatre

Any examination of the present situation of the theatre in Great Britain should take into account certain developments which have taken place broadly in the theatre and in society since the end of the last century. The most important aspects have been a decline in the social status of the theatre audience; continuous competition with cheaper priced, more popular amusements (music hall, cinema and television); and an increasing concentration of the bricks and mortar of the theatre in the hands of non-theatre people or people interested in using them for the more profitable branches of theatre such as revue and musical comedy.

The theatre in Great Britain at the turn of the century through to the end of the First World War was a very profitable business. Since this time the theatre has been fighting a losing battle and the present subsidy system, it should be stressed, is designed not to promote new developments in theatre so much as to save existing forms of theatre from disappearing completely. The production costs of the theatre rose steadily through the first forty years of the century whereas seat prices rose hardly at all between 1905 and 1950. The new audience could not afford higher prices; the cinema offered cheaper amusements. During the interwar years the theatre was heavily taxed. By 1950 the situation in the theatre had become extremely critical, and many provincial theatres closed. At the same time the danger of the complete withering away of the provincial theatre was recognized and agitation began for subsidy to keep the theatres open.

The principle that local authority subsidy is needed to maintain provincial theatres is now fairly widely accepted, if more often in theory than in practice. In several cities plans to rebuild old repertory theatres have been delayed, very seriously, by the continuing economic crisis. However, by the end of 1969 the Arts Council will have spent about £1.5 million from its Housing the Arts Fund, and entered into commitments totalling £2.25 million, usually on a ratio of 4 : 1 between its own contribution and that from local authorities and other bodies. In this way the fund has assisted towards buildings, many of them theatres, valued between £6 million and £9 million. The position in many large cities, nevertheless, remains desperate in comparison with that of some other European countries.

As serious is the condition of children's and youth theatre work. There has been a revolution in the teaching of drama in our schools. This has resulted in the formation of several youth theatres which are, in some ways, the most vital and regenerative part of British theatre. So far practically nothing has been given at all to this area, either by local or national government. Professional theatre groups playing to school-children have been refused educational grants on the grounds that they were

professional actors, and refused Arts Council grants on the grounds that their work was educational. An Arts Council Committee on Theatre for Young People reporting in 1967 at last led to an allocation of £90,000 to four projects catering for professional theatre for young people. Whilst this is a step forward, the growing youth revolution in the theatre remains starved of resources and premises.

These problems are not unrecognized. But the claims of the well-known, recognizable, auditorium- and proscenium-arch type theatre always seems to exert a stronger pull. It is not even that the claims of new work are not valued. There is deep concern that some form of subsidizing teen-age link-groups and youth theatres must be found, and token grants this year to the experimental, environmental theatre work of Inter-Action and Brighton are very heartening. But in the end the people administering the money are public servants, not cultural directors and the policy they pursue largely is inevitably one that can be defended against criticism. Money for experimental theatres and daring new work has been badly missed.

Arts Council subsidy can take the following forms: direct grant; direct grant earmarked for new building; grants to enable companies to tour; transport subsidies to audience parties; training schemes for personnel; guarantees against loss or a contribution towards production; costs of old neglected classics or new works of merit unlikely to be commercial prospects; bursaries and travel scholarships to writers and theatre workers. Or forty-five repertory theatres, about a dozen receive no direct support from their local authority although most of these receive indirect subsidy. Local authority subsidy usually takes the form either of direct grant under the 1948 Local Government act, or of indirect subsidy—the most usual means being remission of rates, supply of certain local authority services free or at a reduced rate and, most important, direct local authority investment in the provision of a theatre building, either new or old, at a nominal or low rent.

Figures for grants from trust and local individual sources are hard to get accurately. It would appear that about twenty-five theatres receive some support in this way and although this fluctuates it would seem to amount to between £20,000 and £25,000 a year over-all. The Gulbenkian Foundation is well-disposed towards the theatre. It will often make new work possible by subsidizing new schemes initially for three years. In this way a grant of £3,000 a year for three years has helped to make the work of the National Youth Theatre possible. This organization is also helped by having productions sponsored by the *Daily Mail*. The *Daily Telegraph* and the *Financial Times* have sponsored World Theatre seasons by visiting international companies.

Although none of the new arts associations has yet organized its own theatre company, the presence of such organizations, collecting local government subsidies and dispensing them, has made it possible for a number of companies, in particular the Oxford Playhouse company, to tour much more widely and successfully.

Recent developments in the non-subsidized area of theatre have shown the critical state of commercial enterprises. Rents and other production costs are pricing independent managements out of business. Business consortiums own a large number of theatres and the yield on investment in straight plays is so small that the future of

legitimate drama in London is highly uncertain. The London theatre audience is now largely a tourist audience which is not really committed to straight drama but prefers 'a night out'. The provincial commercial theatres (such few that remain) have existed for some time by presenting a highly successful popular pantomime around Christmas and subsidizing the rest of the year's activities from this profit. Unfortunately costs have again outstripped receipts and their unsubsidized prospects are poor. It seems likely that the commercial repertory theatres and touring companies will be forced either to close or to reconstitute themselves as trust theatres and therefore qualify for Arts Council and local council support. It is also possible that some form of central pool of money will be made available shortly to assist commercial managements in London to present straight plays.

Such schemes will certainly have been investigated by the theatre enquiry which the Arts Council has set up, with extremely comprehensive terms of reference;<sup>1</sup> its report should be authoritative. The relationships between publicly subsidized theatre and amateur theatre, commercial theatre and television particularly need clarification.

### Music

We may note two striking facts immediately. The first is that the army's expenditure on military bands in 1965-66 was £7.5 million; greater than the Arts Council's entire grant for that year.<sup>2</sup> The second is that in 1967-68 council expenditure in Great Britain was £5,760,000, of which £3,255,000 was spent on music. Of that about £2,345,000 was given to opera and ballet alone—a problem which will be discussed in the final chapter and is omitted here. (It is also worth noting that tax on the sale of gramophone records and of musical instruments itself yields over £7 million a year to the government.)

Two difficulties for professional orchestras are that players are overworked, sometimes seriously (partly because of the need for extensive travelling) and that pay outside London is very low. The paradoxical effect of the Goodman report, which clarified and established the position of four major London orchestras, was to increase the attractiveness of the capital and so damage the provinces. A witness told the Commons committee:

Our situation—I speak only for Bournemouth—has been very considerably complicated by the implementation of the Goodman report . . . which created a vast difference in earning power between the London and the provincial musician . . . The Goodman report itself made note of the fact that if any steps were taken to alter the scene in London action must equally be taken in the provinces, and we fear there has been neglect of this . . . [p. 185]

There have been criticisms of the Goodman report. The *Observer's* music critic, reviewing the London Orchestral Concert Board's 1967-68 report, claimed<sup>3</sup> that

1. *Grants for the Arts*, p. 502-3.

2. *ibid.*, p. 452.

3. 5 January 1969.

incredible though it may sound, the L.S.O., L.P.O., N.P.O. and R.P.O. in this period performed between them *not one single new score* that could be said to make a significant extension to our knowledge of what is happening in music today. In other words, public money is at present supporting nothing more than a musical museum.

This seems harsh. But in view of the evidence that the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra's subsidy exceeds that of all four London orchestras together,<sup>1</sup> there were some grounds for his conclusion that London should support two first-class orchestras rather than four.

Most provincial orchestras are doing no more than hold their own. But the country's musical strength, fortunately, is also nourished by the BBC, in most ways the most powerful single influence in British musical life. The BBC's activities in music are multifold. By its broadcasts over the years it has established a wide audience for good music, creating a climate for appreciation throughout the country: and appreciation results in employment for musicians. Exclusive of gramophone records, the BBC broadcasts about twenty-six programmes of orchestral music and twenty-three hours of recitals and chamber music per week, much of it from its permanent orchestras: the Symphony Orchestra, the Concert Orchestra, the Northern Symphony Orchestra, the Scottish Symphony Orchestra, the Welsh Orchestra, and the smaller Midland and Northern Ireland orchestras specializing in light music. Since its inception in 1965, the Music Programme, the special channel for music, has offered seventy-one hours of good music every week; that it has not yet built up an audience of the size it merits is ascribed directly to the programme's policy of offering modern and non-mainstream works, not merely the well-tried classics. With its radio and television broadcasts, the BBC spends close on £3 million a year on copyright payments to authors and composers. One-third of all the professional symphonic players in permanent orchestras are on its staff and, over all, it provides employment for over half of Great Britain's full-time professional musicians. Each year £1.25 million is spent on musicians and singers of the BBC orchestras and choruses for radio alone, and a further £1 million a year is spent on broadcasts by other orchestras, ensembles and choral groups. The Music Programme alone accounts for £500,000 a year in musicians' fees.

In addition, the BBC does a great deal to promote contemporary British music. It broadcasts more music by living British composers than by the living composers of the rest of the world put together. About £3,000 a year is spent on commissioning new works, and composers also receive assistance by fees for arranging music (£69,000 a year) and composing incidental music (£18,000 a year). The BBC has also organized numerous competitions, for instrumentalists, soloists, composers and conductors. Its extremely distinguished Henry Wood Promenade Concerts are the world's largest annual music festival, have attracted enormous radio audiences, and introduced many *avant-garde* or little-known early works in programmes over recent years.

Jazz has received little public subsidy, and remains relatively neglected, even by

1. *Grants for the Arts*, p. 473.

the BBC. The Musicians' Union commented in a memorandum to the Commons committee:

Most musicians recognise that there is good jazz, of both the 'traditional' and 'modern' kinds, and that, contrary to a widespread belief, the best presentations are not always economically self-supporting. There is at present no 'agency', other than the Arts Council, through which the required public subsidy might be channelled for the support of jazz, and indeed light music, performances; and it is therefore suggested that the Council could with advantage become more active in these fields. [p. 452]

Pop music requires no public subsidy. In a way, however, it receives it through the BBC's Radio 1 channel, established as a pop music service after the government had closed down—largely to prevent waveband interference—the independent or 'pirate' radio services broadcast to the country from ships in the North Sea.

# The mass media and the arts

## Introduction

Institutions for the diffusion of culture are undergoing radical transformations, due partly to the expansion of audiences and profound social, educational and economic changes in their way of life, and partly to technical advances in methods of communication. Over and above the part mass communications media can and should play in creating new art forms, they provide far greater access to traditional culture than such older institutions as theatres, museums and libraries. It was calculated two or three years ago that the audience for a single BBC television performance of Richard Strauss's *Salome* had been greater than the sum of all the audiences for *Salome* in normal opera-house conditions since its first performance in Dresden in 1905.

The consequences of the spread of traditional cultural forms by new technical media are complicated. Herbert Marcuse has remarked:

Bach as background music in the kitchen, against Plato and Hegel, Shelley and Baudelaire, Marx and Freud in the drugstore. Instead they insist on recognition of the fact that the classics have left the mausoleum and come to life again, that people are just so much more educated. True, but coming to life again as classics, they come to life as other than themselves; they are deprived of their antagonistic force, of the estrangement which was the very dimension of their truth. The intent and function of these works have thus fundamentally flattened out.<sup>1</sup>

Marcuse points to a complicated debate about the effects of the mass media, in particular television, one that is far too complex to be entered here. But the difficulty that the 'over-exposure' of the classics, or their transmission in new forms, may distort them completely, co-exists with the old problem that there are large areas of the arts, and large areas of the population, that are never brought into contact at all.

The two issues, here, then, are: the mass media as transmitters of the traditional arts (with questions to be asked about the quality of arts coverage and the relative

1. *One-Dimensional Man*, p. 64. Reprinted by permission of Beacon Press, copyright © 1964 by Herbert Marcuse; published in the United Kingdom by Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd.

allocation of media space); and the mass media as arts in themselves (with questions to be asked about how far this fact is reflected in public subsidies).

### Newspapers

British newspapers, though greatly more sophisticated technically in the past five years or so, have been slow to give any increased attention to the arts. In most of the large national papers, daily and Sunday, the arts are largely ignored except when arts reporting can be built around a 'personality' story (John Osborne has been a favourite target), or in fitsful and occasional efforts to do something more. (The book page of the *Daily Mail*, for instance, has varied extraordinarily in quality over the years.) In local newspapers, with few exceptions, coverage of the arts is uneven, brief and unintelligent. Moreover, the local newspaper's editorial views may have a major and disproportionate effect upon local arts policy.<sup>1</sup> The division between 'quality' newspapers and others is still drawn as sharply in this area as in any other.<sup>2</sup>

The 'quality' newspapers cover the arts with reasonable thoroughness—the *Financial Times*, for instance, is excellent, and Mr. Sean Day-Lewis (*Daily Telegraph*) an outstanding reporter on the arts—but reviewing standards are sometimes arbitrary or inconsistent. An apparent sophistication (witness the 'Briefing' column in the *Observer*) in arts reporting may often distract any substantial attention from the issues involved. The *Observer* and the *Sunday Times* have both tried to give the arts generous space within their considerably enlarged newspapers, and in their technically high-quality colour supplements; some of their attempts, such as the series in the *Sunday Times* of broadsheets on the modern movement in the arts, or its series of wall posters showing Shakespearean characters and reprinting academic literary criticism of them, have been test cases for a consideration of whether mass diffusion may mean mass watering-down. The *Observer*, following the success of the *Daily Mirror* with its children's painting competitions, has itself attracted large entries to its competitions in student's writing and in old people's painting.

It could be argued that the daily newspapers, particularly, are not the proper place for extensive coverage of the arts. In the weekly journals, such as the redesigned *Listener* (published by the BBC), the *New Statesman*, the *Spectator*, and *New Society*, standards remain high in reviewing and general comment. There remains a sharp division between academic journals and newspapers for the general public and, more seriously, sharp divisions between specialist academic journals. There are no British equivalents to the line suggested by the names *Kenyon Review* or *Partisan Review*, nor for that matter to the *Scientific American*—and the contrast in tone, layout and intellectual purposes between the *Times Literary Supplement* and the *New York Review of Books* is instructive. But it seems safe to guess that Great Britain's range

1. For a case, see evidence in *Grants for the Arts*, p. 417.

2. For an excellent and comprehensive discussion of the treatment of the arts by provincial newspapers see Ian Jackson, *The Provincial Press and the Community* (2 volumes), unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Birmingham, 1968.

of specialist publications in the arts (such as *The Gramophone* or *Sight and Sound*) is without equal in number and quality.<sup>1</sup> (Though in a few areas, notably drama, coverage remains intellectually inadequate.)

### Broadcasting

Broadcasting in Great Britain is divided between, on the one hand, the BBC, an autonomous organization appointed by Royal Charter and deriving its revenue from annual licence fees, and, on the other, the independent television companies who are supervised by the Independent Television Authority (working under an Act of Parliament) and receive their income entirely from advertising whose standards are guarded by the authority. One independent television company broadcasts in each area, though many programmes are networked between companies. The BBC broadcasts four internal radio programmes and has two television networks, one of 405 lines, the other of 625 lines with most of its transmissions in colour.

Within these arrangements, the independent companies have been very markedly less willing than the BBC to transmit programmes of a minority interest, including high-quality work in the traditional arts. Their record is a curious mixture of a few notable achievements (for instance, Granada's dramatizations of short stories by D. H. Lawrence) and many unimaginative and derivative programmes. Nevertheless all companies have regularly produced the educational programmes required from them by Act of Parliament and in some cases a weekly survey of the arts. Some companies have subsidized local work in the arts through, for example, the sponsorship of arts fellowships at local universities.

By comparison, the BBC's traditional view that its responsibility includes the provision of programmes offering a balanced coverage of national life and the nourishing of minority interests had led it to produce an outstanding range of programmes in drama, music and critical or documentary surveys of the arts.

The BBC, as has already been said, is now in many ways the centre of British musical life, employing from time to time over half the country's full-time professional musicians, spending over £2.5 million each year on copyright payments to authors and composers, and regularly commissioning new music, especially from British composers. Its Music Programme, which is carried by Radio 3 during the daytime, has been an ambitious attempt to broadcast a balanced coverage of the whole range of world music (excluding light music and pop) during its 71 hours each week. It has offered a number of extensively planned major series on, for example, English song, the music of Schubert and Bach's cantatas. The BBC's part-sponsorship of concerts, competitions and festivals (notably the Cheltenham Festival of contemporary British music) has been indispensable to their continuation.

The Head of Radio Drama has said that

1. For a test case of the newspapers' attitudes towards culture and the arts, see Richard Hoggart, *Speaking to Each Other*, Vol. I, London, 1969, which includes an account of newspaper reactions to the Royal Commission Report on Radio and Television.

the existence of a radio drama department with a script section which regards it as its duty to find the best material available, makes radio drama the only institution in the country which regards the systematic finding and nurturing of dramatic writing as its public duty.<sup>1</sup>

About 300 new radio plays a year are broadcast in this way, besides an average of 500 adaptations from stage or television plays and 150 adaptations of novels. Robert Bolt, Giles Cooper, Tom Stoppard and John Arden are among many distinguished contemporary dramatists first recognized on radio, as is Harold Pinter who was commissioned by the BBC's Drama Department to write new plays after the commercial failure of his *The Birthday Party*; the same story can be told of dramatists trained by writing for television. Here the 'Wednesday Play', with an average audience of over 15 per cent of the British population over the age of 5 has been distinctive—both in offering a regular series of new and often controversial plays by new writers, or writers new to television drama, and in its particular achievements, such as *Cathy Come Home* which besides pioneering new dramatic techniques (this play was a mixture of statistics, voice-to-camera comment, library and documentary material and dramatized episodes specially scripted and acted), have focused national attention on particular problems, in this case the housing shortage. There is also good reason to think that sections of the public which have otherwise no contact with significant artistic work of any kind make up the bulk of the audience for such works.

The BBC Radio's Third Programme has attracted international interest and emulation for its scrupulous attention to artistic work of all kinds, informed criticism, and a variety of talks on philosophy, literature, science and current affairs. It has had time to provide in full the complete cycles of Wagner's *The Ring* and of Shaw's *Man and Superman*, and some 'open-ended' discussions on economic and cultural affairs. Its audience has been correspondingly small, and there has been recently some concern that the BBC's need for more money might lead to some cuts in radio services. The worst of such fears have been realized very recently in the publication of a BBC proposal, *Broadcasting in the Seventies*,<sup>2</sup> which envisages a sharp reduction in the number of orchestras maintained by the corporation—including the training orchestra mentioned earlier—and a 'rationalization' of existing radio network programming. (Though the proposal rejects 'decisively' schemes to introduce any form of advertising into BBC services.) The plans have been fiercely attacked, and in their present form 'referred back' to the BBC by the government.

In addition, there has been an important innovation in the experimental establishment, by the BBC in conjunction with local authorities, of eight experimental local radio stations. (Local authority contributions vary from £63,000 for Radio Merseyside in the Liverpool conurbation to £11,500 for Radio Durham.)<sup>3</sup> These stations have faced the initial technical difficulty that, because the BBC would eventually hope to set up a nation-wide chain of local radio stations for which there would be no

1. *The BBC and the Arts*, p. 16, London, 1968, BBC.

2. BBC, London, 1969.

3. The stations cost about £60,000 a year to maintain.

room on the crowded medium wavebands, they broadcast on very high frequency wavebands, demanding sets which many of the potential audience are unwilling to buy. But local opinion seems, so far, to be moderately enthusiastic. Each station is administered by a Local Radio Council through which the local population may offer advice, criticism and money to the local station. The councils are appointed by, and are responsible to, the Postmaster-General (not the BBC).

The stations observe copyright restrictions on the use of 'needle-time' (the number of hours each week which may be used for playing records) and run an independent news service, as the better-known commercial 'pirate' radios had not done. They are concerned to compete with the steadily diminishing number of local newspapers, hence preventing a monopoly of news and comment from one source, and to resist local pressure groups. Their future is quite undecided: their character is bound to depend largely upon their staffs, particularly the personality of the station manager; the continuity of local revenue and agreement on the means of raising it are uncertain; and some Conservative Members of Parliament favour the establishment of 500 commercial local stations (financed by advertising).

But so far the local stations have been generally lively (Radio Leeds has run a morning's discussion programme with and about lesbians, and a fierce Anti-Smoking Week). Local artistic activity has received considerable publicity and comment, and time has been deliberately allowed for amateur musical and dramatic groups, local poets and novelists, on the air. It could be argued that the stations may encourage an artistic parochialism (at present lack of finance means that professionals can be employed only sparingly); what is more likely is that the stations might provide an important outlet for local talent not yet prepared for national publication. In architecture and town planning a great opportunity exists to engage a local public, and the role of these stations as patrons, particularly of music and drama, might also become considerable.

### Cinema

In its broad outlines, the British situation continues to reflect international trends. British film production is heavily dependent upon American finance, and British films need to secure international distribution to become commercially successful. At present British production is encouraged in three ways: by a regulation insisting that 30 per cent of first feature films shown in the country are British-made; by a levy on cinema admission money which goes towards British production costs; and by the National Film Finance Corporation. Small production companies, however, face almost overwhelming difficulties. Meanwhile the decline in the number of cinemas, and in cinema audiences, continues, if much less sharply than a few years ago. The chains owned by two major companies constitute almost half the cinemas in the country, and it is thus common to find that in major cities a variety of cinemas are showing only two different films between them. The chains produce their own short films and have been very reluctant to book the work of independent film-makers. Two British feature films which received the highest critical praise—*Charlie Bubbles*

and *The Bofors Gun*—were not given national distribution because of fears about audience response. And Britain has no major film school.

This is a paradoxical situation at a time when widespread interest among young people in the cinema is very evident, as is seen in the popularity of film clubs at schools and universities, and in the astonishingly high quality of the short films recently entered for a national competition at the National Film Theatre.

The British Film Institute, which receives a grant from the Department of Education and Science (£410,000 for 1968-69) in the same way as the Arts Council, was founded in 1933

to encourage the development of the art of the film, to promote its use as a record of contemporary life and manners and to foster public appreciation and study of it from these points of view.

These objects were in 1961 extended

to foster study and appreciation of films for television and television programmes generally and to encourage the best use of television.

In its memorandum to the Commons committee, the Institute observed:

There is, however, an important difference in the way in which the Institute exercises its function as compared with the Arts Council. The latter organisation is operating in a field in which well-established patterns of artistic activity already exist, together with the public for them. Opera and ballet companies, repertory theatres, art galleries and the like have existed for many years together with their established standards and clientele. The prime requirement is financial support for these in a time of rising costs and the Arts Council, quite rightly, fulfils its function to a great extent by providing this in the form of grants and subsidies. The British Film Institute is in a very different position. The medium with which it is concerned has developed almost entirely within the last sixty years, primarily as a form of highly commercial popular entertainment and, although nowadays a number of its earlier products are regarded as classics, it is only relatively recently that it has been recognised as capable of producing work comparable as art with some of the best in other fields. The task of the Institute has, therefore, been much more of a promotional character—of actually establishing standards, creating a public for better-quality film, encouraging the serious study of film in schools and universities and ensuring the preservation of films of merit or historical interest. [p. 244]

The institute's activities fall broadly into three main divisions, accordingly. A National Film Archive is maintained, on cripplingly inadequate funds, to buy and preserve important films. An education department provides lecturers and other services to societies, schools and colleges running film courses. And an attempt is made in London and, increasingly, in the provinces, to ensure the maintenance of cinemas devoted to showing films of high quality.

British education has been very slow to take seriously the study of film either as an art form, or as an influence upon values and attitudes; its entire neglect by the universities is particularly striking. One of the institute's aims is

to create a cadre of well-informed people who can move into posts in universities, teacher training colleges and places of that kind to establish courses. [p. 256]

But there is no sign that this aim will be achieved, less because of financial restrictions in education than because of the apparent indifference of university arts faculties. (Though Cambridge now teaches film courses through its English Faculty.) A Society for Education in Film and Television, an independent body with offices in the Education Department of the British Film Institute, organizes courses and study groups, holds conferences, and publishes a journal, *Screen*.

In 1945 the distinguished documentary director Paul Rotha, in his proposal for a distribution plan for a government film corporation—strongly backed by the unions in their 'British Films: Trade Union Policy' (1956)—argued for a network of at least 500 government administered cinemas which would give booking priority to films 'not considered by the trade to be of wide appeal'. The proposal was made long before advent of television's dominance, but the Institute has attempted since 1964 to establish in the provinces film theatres similar to its own distinguished National Film Theatre, which surveys the history of the cinema, and the best commercially neglected current production, in daily programmes for members, and houses the annual London Film Festival. There are two full-time cinemas operating in Manchester and Newcastle, eighteen more operating part-time, and plans to establish thirty-four by the end of 1969. The difficulty has been to find appropriate sites; local authorities, concerned at the disappearance of cinemas from town centres, have co-operated with the Institute and given financial help.

It seems fair to say that the practice, appreciation and study of cinema are in a very primitive state in Great Britain. The fact that the British Film Institute is a separate body from the Arts Council has tended to obscure the startling comparisons which could be made between the situation of the young film-maker and the young musician, or the film enthusiast and the theatre-goer.

We review here a short selection of the wide variety of adventurous experiments in the arts.

### **Midlands Arts Centre for Young People**

This centre, very largely the product of the enthusiasm and leadership of its founder and director, John English, is perhaps the most important single new institution in the whole field. Its aim is to provide young people with comprehensive facilities of a high standard for the creation and appreciation of all forms of art.

The centre, which serves the whole Midlands area, works principally in three ways: through schools, families and individuals. Schools in the region are kept informed of the centre's activities, and arrangements for group membership encourage teachers to take small groups of children to centre events, which may afterwards be discussed and developed within the centre or in the context of the school itself. The effort to integrate the arts with the normal and natural experience of going to school (supported, as described earlier, by the parallel experimentation in the teaching of humanities subjects at school which is backed by DES) is the centre's most fundamental work. In the same way, group memberships taken out by families help to bridge discontinuities between 'the arts' and 'home', though in present circumstances it is more likely that the schools will act, ideally, as cultural 'foster-parents' for a great many children. Individual membership (from the ages of 14 to 25) was initially limited to 10,000 and very heavily over-subscribed; there is also a separate club, on Sundays, for younger children accompanied by their parents.

Each evening of the week at the centre is given to a different activity (folk-music, drama, sculpture, debates) with some professional adult help and leadership, often by artists in residence. Studios, library and rehearsal rooms are continuously open and work of a high standard has been produced, notably by the throngs of young children working there on Sunday mornings. The centre has a small repertory company of young professional actors drawn from drama schools and universities, presenting plays for the centre's membership from August to May. There have been

a number of weekend and day conferences on such subjects as censorship and mime acting.

The centre stands on a 15-acre site in Cannon Hill Park in the centre of Birmingham, at a point where two suburbs, one largely middle-class professional, the other largely working-class with a high proportion of immigrants, intersect. In all, twenty-six buildings are planned; those built so far include an indoor and an outdoor theatre (built as an international project by young people from thirty-five countries, working in the summer months), a pottery workshop, a library, gallery, studios and coffee bar (many buildings are dual-purpose).

Of the £500,000 which the centre had spent by May 1968, 10 per cent had been received from central government grants, 15 per cent from local authorities, and no less than 75 per cent from local sources including industry, educational trusts, trade unions and individuals—an unusual and welcome proportion of local and private finance by British standards generally.

The centre's director has said:

We believe that the level of social and cultural activities in Birmingham is well above the provincial average . . . If, however, you take a measure of modest social and cultural activity right across the board—if, in other words, people came out of their homes for enjoyment of this kind 12 times a year and stopped in front of the television set for the other 353 days—what percentage of people could be accommodated? It turns out to be less than 1 per cent. There is not room for 99 per cent of the people even if they wanted to do it, and because our existing facilities are hardly ever full we have to assume that 99 per cent of them could not care less. We have to accept that people participate in these things through the mass media—through television, radio and recorded music. But again most people agree that society is about people joining together in these things. If you are dealing with the next generation it is important to lay before them the delights and the importance of coming together for these experiences. This 1 per cent minority is, we think, slightly dotty. [p. 163]

The centre hopes that before long every child between 5 and 15 will be able to have substantial contact with its activities.

The centre has been widely admired, and will almost certainly be imitated elsewhere when money permits. It is perhaps worth reviewing some of its difficulties. The Church in Birmingham has complained that the prestige and glamour of the building has attracted an unfair proportion of local money badly needed for youth work of all kinds. The centre's membership has been less active than was hoped, often more prepared to act as audience, or simply to use the centre as a social club, than to try and create activity. The most substantial criticism has been that the centre's membership consists largely of the already interested and to a certain extent catered-for children of professional people—very rarely of children from a working-class background, new to the arts. As the centre's links with school-teachers become more numerous, the criticism may begin to lose its force.

This situation has not arisen through want of effort. Contacts have been made with immigrant organizations, international folk-concerts held, and an 'International Holiday' week held in the park. And 'one unlooked-for pleasure', said Mr. English,

is that teachers in schools with a largely non-English speaking population use this place as a vocabulary extension. They come in for the plays and exhibitions, and experience of these stimulates them to word usage they will not get anywhere else. One revealing instance of this concerns the first two plays in the repertoire, a Goldoni comedy and a Moliere comedy, for which the audience quite often was made up of 90 per cent of children who had never been to the theatre before; and 50 per cent of them immigrants who had never been inside a Western theatre before. There was astonishment and disorientation for the first ten minutes or quarter of an hour. After that they accepted the idiom. [p. 172]

But only about four or five West Indian families have joined, and there are no Indian or Pakistani family members.

The barrier to working-class participation is that joining the centre involves assimilating, and probably conforming to, a whole middle-class style of life, a set of values and manners, entirely foreign to the home environment. It must appear that this gap can be overcome only on middle-class terms.

A different aspect of this tendency for the institutionalized arts to become identified with traditional and middle-class values can be seen, perhaps, in the centre's own criticism of the Arts Council grant allocations:

Clearly the purpose of this place is to put all the arts side by side and to smudge the boundaries between the fine arts and the applied arts. However, there are certain areas of activity which cannot be recognised at all at the moment . . . On the music side we have been refused in the case of our music programmes grants for serious jazz and for folk music. [p. 177]

In general, though, the centre has been an outstanding success and remains flexible and to some extent unpredictable. Its essential features are an interest in new experiments and a willingness to adapt itself to changing circumstances and demands.

#### Centre 42

This project is now badly short of money and its future is in jeopardy. It is of interest here as the most aggressive and articulately evangelistic of recent attempts to broaden the arts audience. The centre was founded by the playwright Arnold Wesker, and owes its impetus entirely to his vision of working-class participation in the arts. The title refers to Resolution 42 of the 1960 Trades Union Congress, calling for greater efforts by unions in all cultural activities. In its appeal brochure the centre said: 'All art, finally, must be available free to the community—this is the ultimate aim of Centre 42.' The centre, housed in a disused railway-engine shed in London, was intended to be specially accessible for a working-class audience—first in London, then elsewhere. A few years ago it raised considerable interest, enthusiasm and some finance for its activities. Festivals—six in 1962—were presented in co-operation with the trades councils. Since then the building has been leased for other purposes—an international conference on violence, several psychedelic evenings—and an historic moment has passed.

The unions have historically shown little interest in the arts. But the real problems here are first, that industrial workers whose energies may often be completely exhausted by their jobs will not be inclined to face the difficulties and challenges of serious

works of art; second, that the wish to educate people into an appreciation of 'culture', when the wish is so openly declared and the 'culture' so traditionally defined, may result only in further alienation.

By an irony characteristic of much work in this field, the centre has certainly stimulated much rethinking among actors, directors and educationalists concerned with the quality of working-class experience. A more political view would be that the nature of the jobs requires changing before any action in the arts. Or it may be argued that the priority now must be in educational work, particularly in comprehensive schools with good facilities for the arts, and that a generation of adults must to some degree be 'abandoned'. There is no doubt that some of those involved with Centre 42 now prefer to work with the most lively young theatre groups, which characteristically prefer to go out to act in factories and in streets, and whose activities are at some points indistinguishable from general social work and community action, or from group psychotherapy.

### **Institute of Contemporary Arts**

The institute was founded in London after the war to lay particular stress on *avant-garde* work in the arts and on the new ways in which they merge. Exhibitions have been held on concrete poetry and on cybernetic serendipity—a study of the interaction between art and computers. Membership gives access to a London centre containing a cinema, exhibition hall and discussion rooms, and the institute's monthly bulletin lists similar activities throughout the country and co-ordinates the work of the 'arts laboratories' dedicated to free provision of the arts—usually with an accompanying stress on pop music and on connexions with the London 'underground' and its newspapers *Oz*, *International Times* and so on—which have flowered briefly in various parts of the country. In these ways connexions are being made between the old categories of 'high culture' and 'pop culture', and—at least symbolically—between the educated middle class and the working-class rooted arts of rock, pop, and folk music.

### **Festivals**

Festivals are not a new idea, but their recent proliferation has been extraordinary and seems likely to continue; they often provide the clearest focus for the liveliest and best of arts work in the provinces. Long established in Great Britain (the Three Choirs Festival of Hereford, Worcester and Gloucester cathedrals is over two centuries old), festivals became very popular after the Festival of Britain (1951).

Their size and aims vary considerably. The Edinburgh Festival, which received £50,000 from the Arts Council and £75,000 from the local authority in 1968, planned to present in 1969 in the course of three weeks the work of two professional opera companies, eight professional orchestras, six professional theatre companies and a host of solo performers, besides a large number of 'fringe' amateur productions. Curiously, it receives considerable concealed subsidy from foreign taxpayers who

help support the many visiting companies. Harrogate Festival, though smaller, is of a similar international character and standard.

Other, smaller festivals are based on particular works (the York Festival, built around the York cycle of mediaeval mystery plays); or composers (Benjamin Britten and the Aldeburgh Festival); or performers (the Bath Festival, until recently largely organized by Yehudi Menuhin); or special subjects (the Cheltenham Festival for literature and new British music). Student festivals grow annually in number and in quality; some offering artistic activities, others merging with and springing from local community projects.

There has been a very marked increase in the number of festivals encouraged and organized not by established artists but by local authorities wishing to give their town or district a firmer sense of itself and to reveal and support the astonishingly widespread amateur participation in the arts. Typical is the Bollington, Cheshire, Festival (in a town of 3,000 inhabitants) which presented a programme of music, drama and arts and crafts given almost entirely by local inhabitants. Such festivals are sometimes criticized as narrow reflections of their community and of the arts, neither locally popular nor of a high standard; they continue to proliferate.

### Morden Tower

A final, very different example is of an attempt by a young poet, Tom Pickard, to maintain in the centre of Newcastle upon Tyne a 'poetry centre'—in this case, a portentous name for a disused mediaeval tower which was rented at a nominal figure from the local authority. The tower has two storeys. One, the ground floor was to be used for selling books, papers, poetry pamphlets, and for a coffee bar and juke box. Upstairs poetry was read by Allen Ginsberg and Gregory Corso among others, but more often by new poets, to a young local audience not solely composed of educated middle-class children. When the tower accumulated debts, help was offered by the local council and by NAA. However, the council could not subsidise a potentially profit-making bookshop, and NAA's wish to publicize the tower's readings, for instance, conflicted with the informality of the original atmosphere. 'Back in Newcastle the Tower still lives, but the electric moment has been bypassed', commented Ray Gosling in his excellent article on such attempts to set up informal new structures with a more casual atmosphere than is usually possible in established institutions.<sup>1</sup>

Though official support was in this case offered both wisely and generously, the episode is a useful reminder of several things: of the immense bias of public subsidies towards the large-scale performing arts in traditional formats; of the delicacy and sensitivity needed in a new profession of 'cultural administration' which might always become cultural bureaucracy; of the distance between young working-class people, and many young artists, and the 'centres of cultural power'.

1. 'A World of their own Making', *Listener*, 13 June 1968.

# The idea of a 'cultural policy': conclusions

## The Arts Council and the idea of 'cultural policy'

Unesco's Round-Table Meeting on Cultural Policies (Monaco, 1967) concluded that A cultural policy has to satisfy two apparently contradictory requirements, centralization and decentralization, which do not occur at the same moment or have the same purpose. Centralization is necessary at the initial stage of cultural action. Even in countries with a federal structure, some degree of concentration is considered necessary—to appraise cultural problems in their national perspective, to encourage local authorities through subsidies, to provide a legal framework and administrative rules of procedure, and to intervene directly where there is a lack of initiative and only nationally taken action will produce results (e.g., leader training, experiment). It is only when all this has been done centrally that decentralization can profitably start.<sup>1</sup>

Whether or not this is generally true—we think that it is—it is clear that in Great Britain only the Arts Council, in conjunction with such bodies as the British Film Institute and with DES, is capable of carrying out such centralization and establishing anything which could be called a national cultural 'policy' or 'plan'. There is a traditional distaste for such planning in Great Britain. Current Arts Council policy is quite firmly stated. In the Chairman's view:

I think that would be wrong, both politically and socially wrong. [p. 49]

We have not got a policy whereby we produce a great system for the whole country and say there ought to be a general level of artistic amenity throughout the country—here, there and everywhere. [p. 485]

The Scottish Chairman, similarly, has said:

it is by arts rather than by means of an overall plan that we should try and make forecasts of what is likely to be possible or desirable. I do not think we have ever made an overall plan, and I very much doubt if it would be very useful if we got one out. [p. 219]

1. *Cultural Policy: A Preliminary Study*, 2nd ed., rev., p. 41, Paris, Unesco, 1969.

The council feels its present job is to meet the already overwhelming demand for more money:

Ordinarily the Council receives enough applications from all parts of the country to render it inappropriate and unnecessary (even with its present increased resources) to go in search of suitable objects of its bounty. [p. 28]

And current grant allocations, as described in the first chapter, are based on pragmatic support, 'subject to historic explanations', for various successful enterprises:

Once we decide an institution is worthy to be alive our concern is to keep it alive and to assess its needs on that basis. [p. 47]

There are, none the less, several issues in which the problems confronting the council are so serious as to necessitate a careful rethinking of fundamental policy, which would, however, need to be based on accurate long-term forecasting which (almost incredibly) hardly begins to exist in Great Britain. In his report for 1967-68 the Chairman comments: 'I believe this policy to be basically right . . . but it may be that, as time goes on, we will have to consider a change.'<sup>1</sup>

Great Britain's whole policy may be about to change in social ways. We now review briefly three main areas in which a firmer national policy decision is becoming necessary.

#### *The regions*

Of the British population, 85 per cent lives outside London. The council told the Commons committee that the

division of its funds between London and the regions is now regarded as reasonably balanced even including the subsidy to Covent Garden. In fact slightly more is now spent in the regions than in London and if Covent Garden and the National Theatre are regarded as national institutions then the preponderance in favour of the regions is considerable. [p. 28]

(Though in his 1967-68 report the Chairman says that 'simple justice compels us to call a relative halt to expansion in many London plans and institutions until at least something comparable to the London "density" of culture is available in other parts of the country'.)<sup>2</sup>

NAA found the council's assessment of the current balance 'astonishing' and has argued both that the current balance is overwhelmingly in London's favour (based on comparative expenditure per head of population) and—a different point—that the grant to Scotland, Wales and to various regions is highly unequal. The council's Chairman has replied that if certain areas

are not already active in promoting something it will not be very long in the present climate of interest, before they are. I think it will be a very long time before we need take stock and say, 'Let us see who are the laggards and who has not asked us for what they need'. [p. 486]

1. Arts Council Report, 1967-68, *Changes and moves*, p. 7.

2. *ibid.*, p. 7.

But some areas do seem both to lack adequate cultural provision and a regional association to focus and increase the demand.

In 1968-69 the council gave 2.27 per cent of its total budget to regional arts associations. It faces strong arguments for the spread of such associations over the whole country—besides some criticism of them, already noted—and a variety of pleas for decentralization. It is virtually a question of a centralized decision on methods of decentralization of national economic planning and government. The council appointed in 1968 a Chief Regional Adviser for help on the issue.

The Commons committee was certainly right in seeing

a decision on regional development in the context of Arts Council development as the most important single decision the Arts Council will have to take in the next five to ten years. [p. xli-xlii]

### *Opera*

The council's Chairman told the Commons committee:

When I first came to the Arts Council my firm belief was that I would effectively reduce the grant to Covent Garden. That was dissipated very rapidly. [p. 59]

in line with the council's support for successful institutions.

The result was tartly criticized by Kenneth Tynan:<sup>1</sup>

The Arts Council's annual report for 1967/8 reveals the usual crazy imbalance. Out of £5,750,000 distributed among all the arts in England, more than £2 million—well over a third—went to Covent Garden and Sadler's Wells. The work of these two organisations, which confine themselves mainly to orchestrally backed singing and dancing as practised in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, is thus assumed to outweigh in value the whole of the English theatre, since the money expended on 70 theatre companies was only £1,700,000. We need either a flood of new money for the arts, or a rediffusion of the present trickle, so that low priorities like opera and ballet are no longer permitted to jump the queue.

There are of course concealed advantages from this subsidy. The perpetuation of Covent Garden and Sadler's Wells is a major tourist attraction to London, and serves as a catchment for a public who, when in London, patronize theatres and concerts. The companies are also potential earners of money in foreign tours or from films of their production. Moreover, if opera of a high standard is to continue, large amounts of money must necessarily be involved. But the comment cannot be shrugged off. The Welsh National Opera Company likewise received 75 per cent of the total music allocation for Wales (1967-68). Opera received 36 per cent of the total Welsh budget, 34 per cent of the total English budget. Moreover, not only were Covent Garden and Sadler's Wells in need of even greater subsidies at the end of 1968, but, as Professor Claus Moser warned the Commons committee (on the evidence of *Performing Arts: the Economic Dilemma* by W. J. Baumol and W. G. Bowen):<sup>2</sup>

as the country becomes more efficient and as Britain becomes technologically more advanced

1. *Observer*, 1 December 1968.  
2. New York, 1966.

in the other sectors, so the wage level there will rise, our wage level at Covent Garden will have to go up more and more but we will not be able to make up for it in terms of productivity. This points irrevocably to what they call the inevitably increasing income gap in non-profitmaking arts. [p. 122]

When, finally, the number of people who are able to attend London opera is taken into account, the over-all demands made by opera of the national arts budget become seriously disconcerting (though there is some evidence that an unusually wide educational and class spread exists within London opera audiences).

There are outstanding particular problems. The Welsh National Opera Company has no orchestra of its own, a situation it has described as 'grotesquely unbusinesslike'.<sup>1</sup> It is a flourishing company. But the successful maintenance of its present programme, let alone the establishment of an orchestra, will require that it receives an even greater proportion of the Welsh budget.

The Arts Council has commissioned an inquiry

to consider the existing and to estimate the potential public demand for opera and ballet in different parts of Great Britain; and to consider how far, under existing policies, these demands are being or are likely to be met; and to make proposals regarding future policy, indicating the scale of financial support, both in respect of capital and recurring expenditure, which might be required to give them effect. [p. 502]

This inquiry, long awaited, has still not been published at the time of writing. It is bound to raise awkward questions, particularly concerning the allocation of resources between opera and the other arts.

#### *Local authorities*

The present position is the result of a general reluctance to consider arts spending, and of the continued economic crisis.

The DES view, that 'stimulus is very much a matter of response', that local initiative must be awaited, is shared by the Arts Council:

We take the view that it is not for us to teach our grandmother to suck eggs. If we went to local authorities and exercised any pressure we should probably get the reverse of the effect that we required. [p. 48]

.....

We do our best by urging them, cajoling them, wheedling them, telling them how splendid they are and progressive minded, and how good it will be for everyone. But we cannot coerce them and it is dangerous to be over coercive. [p. 484]

But, even short of making the sixpenny-rate expenditure compulsory as many would prefer, it may not be a question of coercion. The Hallé Orchestra's manager told the Commons committee

there is a never-ending battle to determine where responsibility lies as between the local authority and the Arts Council, and there appear to be no clear guidelines for either body.

1. *Grants for the Arts*, p. 362.

There is talk from time to time of a pound for a pound, and various other schemes have been suggested over the years. However, there seems to be nothing which can guide a city like Manchester about how much it ought to contribute, bearing in mind the guarantee element which would mean that if the city contributes a pound more this means a pound less from the Arts Council, assuming we break even on the budget. It is this factor which tends to encourage a city like Manchester to safeguard its own public purse because it feels more should come from the national exchequer. [p. 181-2]

And Clive Barker remarks in his article 'One for You, and One for Me and Three for Covent Garden':<sup>1</sup>

why should we expect any more from our municipal authorities than is shown by the national government today? It would be reasonable to expect any municipal body faced with a request for subsidy to be given some guidance, some guidelines, by the national government body. But in fact whatever is available is on a purely ad hoc basis and not motivated by any policy deeper than personal preference, or whim, and blind chance.

There are, for example, no booklets to argue local authorities into the need for arts provision or to advise them on the best ways of spending money.

Again, it would be surprising if the Arts Council did not come to feel the need for a clearer policy in this area.

It should also be repeated that, partly because of a shortage of money, there has been extraordinarily little long-range forecasting (whether by the Arts Council or anyone else) of trends in population, education and the economy in relation to the arts. The Commons committee recommended that

The Arts Council should collaborate with other relevant bodies such as local authority associations, the large charitable trusts and representatives of industry and commerce, to piece together a more complete picture of overall support for the arts than at present exists [p. lxi].

### Conclusions

The report's main themes may now be summarized. Since the advent of the Labour Government in Great Britain, public subsidy to the arts has very considerably increased, and has mainly been spent on the large-scale performing arts rather than upon individual artists. Links between the Arts Council and the Department of Education and Science are designed to co-ordinate this subsidy with radical changes in ways of teaching and using the arts in education, and with the general stress, particularly strong in the theatre, on work with the arts and young people. The BBC's role as patron is indispensable to British musical and dramatic life. By comparison, the record of local authority spending is disappointing. In a climate now very favourable to the arts and to arts planning, several new developments have emerged, most notably the regional arts associations and the Midlands Arts Centre for Young People. Finally, the increase in government spending on the arts, and a number of particular problems,

1. *Everyman*, Liverpool, Autumn 1967.

are compelling the Arts Council to move towards cultural planning on a national scale.

A few other features of the current situation—in the main disquieting features—deserve mention.

First, support for the arts in Great Britain seems very largely to mean middle-class support for the best of the nineteenth-century arts. A comment on international trends in theatre, made by the Unesco Round Table Meeting on Cultural Policies, exactly describes the British position:

In the Western world the theatre has gradually left its popular origins behind and has become a form of expression for the élite; it is guided chiefly by conservative middle-class taste, the aesthetic promptings of *avant-garde* artists, or by an intellectual desire to challenge society. The last two factors may go together, but all these types of theatre remain inevitably restricted to a small public. The association with social class acquired by the drama in the course of its evolution is reflected even in the architectural design and internal layout of theatres.<sup>1</sup>

The tendency for 'art' and middle-class values to become identified has already been noticed in the case of the Midlands Arts Centre and of Centre 42. To say this is not to offer criticism but to describe a situation which efforts in schools and elsewhere have hardly begun to approach; though in other areas—particularly in the almost ludicrous comparison of government expenditure on cinema (£410,000 in 1968-69) and on opera (about £2,575,000 in the same year)—criticism seems called for. The problems of maintaining immigrant cultures, or of merging their strengths into British national life, also await examination.

Second, individual artists, and particularly individual writers, are not benefiting greatly from increased spending. Arts Council spending on orchestras, ballet and drama companies provide opportunities for composers, playwrights and choreographers (besides performers and directors). But it does not help, usually, the painter, the sculptor and the non-dramatic writer. There is a strong case, for instance, for the establishment of a chain of nationalized bookshops, and perhaps for an autonomous, non-profit-making publishing house.

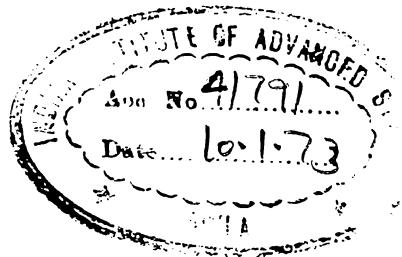
Third, there is a need for some consideration of the relationship between amateur and professional work. This is where there may be disagreement between those who value most highly a certain quality of achievement, and those who value a personal and committed involvement with art on as wide a scale as possible, however clumsy some of the results. Much of the cultural life of Britain, both in London and the provinces, still depends—to an extraordinary degree—on the efforts of devoted amateurs; it is still to such bodies that large sectors of the population look for their cultural activities. It has, for instance, been claimed that there are several hundred dramatic societies in the Birmingham conurbation alone. Their importance lies in the opportunities they provide for enthusiasm and for innovation, since both may—though there is no firm evidence of this—be stifled by public subsidy. Again this brings us back to attitudes developed in the years of formal education. An increased split, already

1. *Cultural Policy: A Preliminary Study*, 2nd ed., rev., p. 29, Paris, Unesco, 1969.

formidable, between official definitions of 'the best art' in education and official recipients of public subsidy, on the one hand, and real preferences and tastes, spontaneous activities, on the other, would be disastrous.

Fourth, in the increasingly complicated debate about the allocation of public spending, decisions will become necessary not only between one art and another, and between London and the regions, but between cities and small towns—*Public Patronage of the Arts* argued for concentrated spending on a dozen or so large centres—and between the young and the old, provision for whose needs and wants in the arts have been little considered.

This is part of a larger final point; that Britain has undertaken little long-range planning of any kind so far, nor studied methods in other countries, nor taken much care over cultural information. Statistics in the whole field covered by this report are hard to come by, hard to compare, and hard to rely on. A series of lengthy particular studies is needed, besides a more vigorous public discussion of relative priorities. Research into cultural policy can, happily or unhappily, no longer remain the province of the amateur, the journalist and the part-time academic.







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