

CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS IN SERBIA

Any serious, inquiring view of a nation turns first to its institutions, and on the basis of their structure, quality and effectiveness assesses its condition and identity. Furthermore, in the case of cultural institutions, their numerousness, territorial distribution, accessibility and openness to change indicate the level of cultural democracy and possibilities for the full and multi-sided satisfaction of cultural needs of all strata of the population. Quality, diligence, well conceived programs, sense of mission and responsibility to the spiritual needs of the people indicate the maturity of a nation and its culture.

For more than four decades our culture was forced to serve as a means of justifying an authoritarian, repressive, unfree world, based on the arrogance of power and the ideology rooted in Comintern stalinism. Half of a century of the monopoly of the ruling, the only allowed party, also meant the usurpation of moral and value contents of culture, whose institutions - instead of being institutions of freedom and serving the truth - were turned into instruments of censorship and servants of a conservative, primitive, despotic bureaucratic oligarchy. We quote some remarks by Dobrica Ćosić, as a comment on the discontinuities and painful survival, characteristic for the Balkans, equally valid even at the moment when - in late sixties - we started to resist this plague more often and in larger numbers: "...institutions are primitive, politicized, bureaucratic, essentially uncreative, with no authority. Many social conditions and relationships are primitive or semi-civilized. These are the conditions where external, material and technical features are not accompanied by adequate internal, spiritual contents and moral consciousness; these are the conditions of stirred

and released instincts. Individual and collective behavior are often predominantly determined by asociality and aggressiveness. General social norms and values are uncertain and unstable. Arbitrariness and lack of organization loom large. Their carriers are semi-civilized peasantry, poorly educated working class, young bourgeoisie, primitive intelligentsia - and all that in the circumstances of the political hegemony and capriciousness of the bureaucratic oligarchy. Social and civil responsibility, conscientiousness and work discipline remain low, critically low, so that our society as a whole is very extensive and unproductive."

This 1967 assessment still holds today, when we have come a long way towards political pluralism, parliamentary democracy and a completely new role of the state and the market in culture. But the forces of inertia are still powerful; and our tragic struggle with time and for time - in the maelstrom of nationalist euphorias and separatisms that ended the second Yugoslavia and anew placed the issue of the historical and cultural unity of the Serbian nation on the agenda - that struggle is, at the outset of the third millennium, still going on, with the same uncertainties and resentments experienced long ago. We are still marked by that crossroads between patriarchal and civil culture, by conflicts between the traditional popular culture and the urban one, by the striving to overcome parochiality and the practice of policing the mind, toward the breadths and freedoms of genuine cultural communication.

This years-long crisis trend also involves a disturbing absence of a long-range, integral civilizing program, which has not been offered either in these first years of political pluralism which we are experiencing. Neither the new rulers nor the opposition have yet recognized the emancipatory value of culture and its resistance to ideological, political, national, etatist or any other particularist instrumentalization. Culture can only serve its own genuine values, and its means, based on freedom and the notion of the creative subject, its striving towards comprehensive humanness and its readiness to incorporate the culture of the whole human community. The intervention of the wider society through its institutions is possible and needed only insofar as it supports the

enhancement and expansion of liberty and truth of the art - the negation of the inhumane world - the primacy of truth over the utilitarian, and the defense of experiment against the routine.

We have culture, but we do not have cultural policy, we do not have a conception of the cultural development, nor the ability to understand it, we do not have the system and instruments for encouraging this development, the criteria for evaluation of programs in cultural institutions, the idea of the national priorities in these matters. Cultural strategy includes the selection of objectives and means to realize those objectives in cultural development, as a complement to the development of a democratic, stable and prosperous society. The majority of our cultural institutions (some 85 percent of them) were formed immediately after the year 1945, and are still characterized by the program and organizational solutions conceived in those times, as well as by insufficiency of financial resources (so that some of them do not even have their own buildings and work rooms). They emerged spontaneously, instead of being well planned; they seldom represented the continuation of older traditions and often mere acts of political voluntarism and symbols of the new order; they were located beyond or at the margins of the middle- and long-term plans for social development. Their territorial distribution was uneven, little attention was paid to the necessary reduction of inequalities in cultural development among various regions or to the demands of regional development. Thus we inherited a chaotic metropolization (the concentration of the institutional network in Belgrade) together with a neglected, suppressed cultural periphery (particularly in the south and south-east of Serbia).

While the cities somehow managed to gradually overcome the image of old Turkish townships and the spirit of backwardness, villages mostly stayed out of the reach of the cultural institutions network. Buildings of former village cooperatives and local houses of culture were turned to other uses, more in the interests of local authorities and local economy. In times of short-lived prosperity, just as in poorer times, most savings and withholdings were made exactly at the expense of culture. Nowadays, the main feature of cultural development of

Serbia is still the great disproportion between creative potentials and needs, on the one hand, and unbearably meager material basis for that development. The proportion of expenditures on culture in our country has rarely reached 1 percent of the national income. In 1979, that percent was 0.61, in 1989 0.40, to shrink to 0.36 in 1990.

The flow of money into culture from public funds has always grown considerably slower than the income of industry or the inflation rate - a trend we still have today. There are no serious investments in the construction and development of cultural institutions, and even reconstructions and patch-work have been forced. New work spaces are an urgent need. Only 34.4 percent of all settlements in Serbia have special rooms or buildings for cultural activity. In Belgrade, it happens that here and there something is built or reconstructed (the National Theatre, Atelier 212, Film Library), but these are national or representative institutions. But at the same time in, say, Vranje, the house of culture has been being built for twenty years - to say nothing of smaller towns. The total work area of all cultural institutions in central Serbia (villages excluded) amounts to only 413,276 m², with 14.2 inhabitants to each square meter. In Belgrade (with its 16 municipalities) the total area of cultural institutions is 199,350 m², with 8.3 inhabitants per square meter. Here, of course, we do not broach the question of quality and functionality of these buildings and their rooms. How cramped they are, and how big their suffering is, is obvious to any visitor to the University Library in Belgrade, or to the Library or the Archive of the Academy of Sciences and Arts, not to mention the absence of appropriate place for the Historical Museum of Serbia or the Natural History Museum! For a future cultural policy investments into work space of cultural institutions are the most urgent task. But the worst consequence of this kind of economy is the fact that, right now, the largest expense of cultural institutions consists of employees gross salaries, instead of production and program expenditures, or material and functional costs. Libraries stopped buying new books long ago, there are no new acquisitions in museums, publishing houses vegetate on giving graphic services and printing administrative forms, instead of publishing books, musicians employed at the Opera are

on strike because they cannot afford to buy new instruments and the necessary equipment.

In these circumstances the question is how to survive, and cultural strategy remains an unrealistic intellectual exercise.

To this list of disastrous consequences of the absence of a well-conceived, long-term, effective cultural policy we should also add dividedness, unacceptable fragmentation or partialization of cultural institutions. We have a low average number of employees per institution, together with a large proportion of administrative and other service personnel, compared to the number of people employed in basic activities. Namely, 80 percent of Serbian cultural institutions employ 8-10 people, with 45 percent of them not engaged in primary activities of the institution. That pressure of unproductive labor, protected for years by the so-called Law on Associated Labor and the Law on Beginning Employees, poor distribution of public budgets and the rule that employment, once achieved, can never be lost, together with the absence of competition in knowledge and abilities, have turned our national and other cultural institutions into inert, stagnating, uncreative legions of bureaucrats, whose laziness and inability destroyed many publishing houses, theaters, the Opera, the Ballet, Radio and Television, libraries, etc. A new direction in our cultural policy presupposes that criteria of successfulness of cultural institutions will have to be sought in the maturity and results of their basic activity (for example, the number of processed and stored objects in museums and archives, the circulation of books in libraries, the quality of shows in theaters, the quality of musical performance in orchestras, etc), instead in the mere fact of their existence, hollow parading or status symbolism of the given social environment. But this remark must be considered in the light of the fact that the level of employment in cultural institutions in Serbia is minimal: in Belgrade, per 1,000 inhabitants only 3.5 people are employed in cultural institutions; in Pčinje District, on the other hand, that figure is only 0.5.

If we take into account that each municipality in Serbia has an average of 4 cultural institutions (publicly financed) - 2.9 in Kosovo and 3.7 in Vojvodina - and that

these institutions are mostly small and undeveloped, and if we know that nowadays culture still gets less than 1 percent of budget resources, we can safely conclude that what we have, actually, is a developed network of undeveloped cultural institutions. For over twenty years, this network has not undergone any significant change, and its global irrationality additionally feeds on the above-mentioned irrationality of internal organization, immobile labor force, unpreparedness for the challenges of the market and lack of readiness to open themselves to new kinds of audiences and users. These institutions, for the most part, consist of the so-called cultural-educational and similar institutions (cultural centers, houses of culture, workers and popular universities, and so on), followed by those that keep, store and circulate particular cultural goods (libraries, museums, galleries, institutions for the preservation of cultural monuments, archives), then those which engage in artistic activities (theaters, orchestras) and finally cinema (movie production, distribution and screening) and publishing. Among them the least numerous are those devoted to the development and satisfaction of cultural needs of children and village inhabitants.

Before we give an overview of the actual condition of these institutions according to their respective areas of activity, let us say that lately an increasing number of private initiatives in the sphere of culture have appeared in Serbia, and that private entrepreneurship has established its own cultural institutions (publishing houses, exhibition and sale galleries, firms for movie distribution and screening, video clubs and video production, radio and TV stations, concert agencies, etc.) There is no official statistics on them, and state authorities - apart from tax collectors and customs - still ignore them. They are not part of the official cultural policy, but it is obvious that without them our cultural supply and cultural market would be even more meager, mor protected by the inertia inherited from the "self-management" era and the guaranteed survival under the safe wing of the state. The penetration of private institutions and firms into our culture brings new forms of organization, financing and sale of cultural production, an aggressive market orientation with developed advertising and sponsorship, as well as up-to-date forms of media promotion. It is to be ex-

pected that the state will not so easily renounce its monopoly over cultural institutions, over legal initiative, supervision and staff policy in this domain. It still retains the role of the chief arbiter, at least in financing and encouraging the creative work of artists and the activity of institutions. Our current renewed etatization (through ministries and district bodies) annihilates the last remnants of former autonomy of municipalities and cities in creating cultural policy, neglecting the necessary balance between centralization and autonomy indispensable for a stable long-term development and cultural democracy. Thus there are good reasons to expect a rigid attitude of the state towards private entrepreneurship in culture. Signs of this rigidity have already shown, especially in tax policy, which has not served as a stimulus even to the public sector, let alone to private initiatives. The future of cultural institutions lies in complementarity and cooperation between these two sectors - public and private - and not in their mutual antagonization.

At the end of this introduction we would like to add a few words on the personnel issue, since it is people who make institutions. In Serbian cultural institutions some 14,000 people are employed (Serbia without provinces 85,000, Kosovo and Metohija 1,500, Vojvodina about 4,000) - excluding publishing houses, broadcasting and private sector. Qualification structure shows that they mainly have secondary education (30 percent), about 19 percent have university degrees, 12 percent first level university education, and all the rest elementary level education. Sixty-four percent of all employees in culture live in Belgrade, and only 36 percent in other parts of Serbia. Some insight into our personnel potentials can be gained by looking at memberships in professional associations in the field of culture: the Association of Societies of Archivists - about 750 members; the Society of Librarians - 650; Association of Cinema and TV Artistic Workers - 1,200 (with 700 free-lancers among them); the Association of Cinema Artists - 240; the Association of Free-Lance Cinema Actors - 80; the Association of Writers - 750; the Association of Literary Translators - 1,500; the Association of Visual Artists - 1,500; the Society of Artistic Critics - 60; the Association of Free-Lance Photographers - 600; the Association of Orchestra Artists - 180; the Association of Composers - 200; the

Association of Musical Artists - 370; the Association of Societies of Musical and Ballet Pedagogues - 1,100; the Association of Drama Artists - 1,500; the Association of Ballet Artists - 150.

All that, no doubt, amounts to a considerable potential, and if the approximate number of other unionized employees in culture (in TV, in particular) is added to it, the total is over 17,000.

In the remaining sections a brief overview of the institutional condition of culture in Serbia, according to branches of activity, is offered.

BOOK PUBLISHING

Measured by the position of the book and publishers in our society, the conclusion that we increasingly represent a community marked by oral culture is fully warranted. In Serbia there are currently about 120 publishing houses, but the exact number is hard to establish, since books are increasingly published also by private publishers, schools, religious communities, scientific institutes, universities and others. In the year 1988, 5,191 titles of books and brochures were published in Serbia, with total issue of 24,221,000 copies (5,536,000 in Vojvodina and 3,017,000 in Kosovo and Metohija). Among them, 4,239 titles were by national authors and 952 translations of foreign authors. In 1991 a significant decline was noted, since only 3,500 titles were published, with 30 percent consisting of reprints. During this year (1992) we can expect an even more drastic decline in issues, somewhere between 1,000 and 1,500 titles. Book publishing has almost been destroyed, not only by the decline in issues and by a sharp decline in population's buying power, but above all by a long and expensive process of manufacture, sale and collecting payments.

The market is short in printing paper, special kinds of paper, colors, films and other printing materials. Cellulose has to be imported, just like all kinds of higher quality paper, whose prices are soaring. In our country books are treated as pure commodity (which is not the case even in the most developed countries). No support has been given even to the publishing of major works of national culture, first books by home authors, lexicography, books for children, books in the languages of ethnic

minorities. Due to enormous bank interests (and even with the average market interest) publishers can no longer afford loans, and printers are so impoverished that neither they can finance the manufacturing of books as they used to. Insufficiently developed bookstore network (in Belgrade only 12 real bookstores remain, with all others selling all kinds of stuff) is imposing extortionate conditions (charging up to 70 or 80 percent of the book's price for the sale) and thus ruining both publishers and buyers. It is obvious that, strategically speaking, the biggest problem is exactly the marketing of books. No doubt, bookstores are also restrained by taxes (sometimes amounting to 40 percent of their income), but some bookstores, which are part of larger publishing houses, indulge in monopoly practices at the cost of other publishers, especially smaller or private ones. Our book market is limited due to language and alphabet, especially after the recent economic, political and linguistic disintegration of the Serbo-Croatian language space, but it is also true that publishers do not pay enough attention to studying the market. Marketing and advertising departments do not exist in most publishing houses, or remain at a rudimentary level. Free-lance salespeople have become the main factor of marketing books and they impose their tastes upon publishers (expensive, lavish books of doubtful quality, or outright trash - from astrology and dream-readers to pornography).

It is necessary to form a specialized enterprise for the distribution of books, or to encourage the development of bookstores as autonomous enterprises, waive VAT on books, supply loans for their manufacture and sale. The time of privileged, politicized, large and inert publishers, with enormous and over-expensive administrative and editorial staffs, has gone, and there are more and more new, small, alternative or so-called independent, private publishers. New models of efficient business and production cooperation among publishers, printers and bookstores are emerging, and their aim must be to give the book back to buyers and libraries, to create new readership. The inflation reigning for several years has rendered authors' fees minimal, since publishers can no longer pay them immediately and completely. The same applies to copyright obligations toward foreign firms. There are publishing houses whose debts to for-

foreign authors and firms amounts to 150,000 dollars. To this bleak picture we should add the fact that the import of foreign books and publications had been on the decline for years, to reach a halt in 1992, due to the sanctions of the international community against Yugoslavia. They also make impossible the export of our books abroad, which was anyway sporadic, poorly organized and without any connection with cultural policy measures.

LIBRARIES

Since the year 1980, the number of libraries in Serbia has been diminishing. Today we have 1,150 public libraries (305 of them in Vojvodina and 180 in Kosovo and Metohija) with a total of 13.806,000 book copies. There are 2,928 school libraries - in elementary and high schools - 516 of them in Vojvodina and 367 in Kosovo and Metohija - with a total of 12.984,000 books. There are also 520 scientific and research libraries (84 in Vojvodina, 40 in Kosovo and Metohija), with 9.748,000 books. The National Library of Serbia has holdings of 3,5 million library items, exchange with 280 libraries throughout the world (from 36 different countries), and 10,000 users yearly. It is located in a new building, built in 1973, but due to the lack of financial resources the interior is not yet finished. The Matica srpska library in Novi Sad possesses a total of about 900,000 items (850,000 books and other materials, plus 180,000 yearly files of newspapers and journals), and has at its disposal four times less space than needed. Its expansion is to be the largest investment in Vojvodina by the end of the century. The international standard for public libraries holdings is 2-3 books per inhabitant, and in Serbia we currently have 1.42 books per inhabitant (Serbia without provinces 1.39, Vojvodina 1.71 and Kosovo-Metohija 1.15). In Belgrade, the average is 1.62, in Pčinje District 0.87, in Toplice 1.01, in Raška 0.48, in Kolubara 1.59, in Lužnica 1.93, etc.

In any case, great effort is needed if we want to reach the international standards.

The library network in Serbia is also undeveloped and uneven. In Raška District there is one library per 32 settlements, in Lužnica one per 21 settlements, and in

Belgrade one per 0.9 settlements. In Serbia as a whole each library covers an average of 5.4 settlements. According to standards for public libraries each main library should cover an area of 150 m², and in Serbia nowadays half of municipal libraries work in space below this minimum. The number of reading rooms and rooms for research work in our libraries is also insufficient: there are 686 readers per seat, in Vojvodina 293. Shortage of money in these cultural institutions has already become chronic. The poorest ones wither away or merge into other cultural institutions. The construction of special buildings for libraries is not being planned, even in the case of university libraries in Serbia (and there are 6 of them). In all libraries (university and research ones included) the rate of acquiring new books had been dropping for a decade, and two years ago virtually stopped altogether. All financial resources are spent on mere survival (basic expenditures and employees salaries), and a totally insignificant sum goes to buying new books: the proportion is 96:4 percent, with the latter figure indicating the costs of new acquisitions. It is estimated that our libraries buy up less than 5 percent of current publishing (or total issues).

Books thus become something private, a symbol of personal status, instead of being a means of massive, public education and a basis of cultural democracy. Poor financial condition of libraries is detrimental both to publishers and users. We must realize that libraries represent a priority in cultural and educational policy: without them, there is no science, no education, no intellectuals.

The overwhelming majority (85 percent) of library membership consist of high school and university students, which is natural, but if there are school libraries, which satisfy the needs of students, there is no need to duplicate holdings (public libraries holdings are in 80 percent devoted to the same readership), but it should be replaced by an effort to win new kinds of readership. The absolutely largest number of users of public libraries come from among elementary and high school students, who are lost as readers upon graduating from high school. This accounts for the fact that total holdings of all libraries are turned over through leasing just 1.06 times

each year, which is insufficient and uneconomical. School and public libraries cannot always address one and the same user, limit its activity to only a portion of the general population, and devote four-fifths of their existing holdings and new acquisitions to this same readership. A good example of new initiatives in librarianship has been the effort of the City Library of Belgrade to attract new readers, introduce new working hours (till late at night, including Saturdays and Sundays), cooperate with publishing houses in publishing new books, found the "Belgrade Readers Review" and a new TV channel devoted exclusively to culture and education. Its total holdings of 2.2 million books are used by 200,000 readers yearly in 113 local libraries throughout Belgrade. Our libraries also lack trained librarians, computer equipment (especially UNIMARC, for computer cataloguing, as a part of the application of international standards), a rational policy of acquiring new supplies, and a better network of specialized libraries (research and school ones, libraries for the blind, etc). We would not even mention the protection and conservation of books. Moreover, books from Serbia are increasingly less visible abroad, since even the National Library of Serbia does not have enough money to exchange books with its 300 partner-libraries from abroad.

ARCHIVES

The lack of sense for the significance of the written word and for the need to keep and cultivate the memory of the nation, particularly documents from the past, is not only reflected in our attitude toward books and libraries, but in the neglectfulness toward archives as well. Saving and protection of cultural heritage cannot be the exclusive task of archive departments and archives, but represents an important public issue, calling for an immediate response from the state. Serbia has 49 general and specialized archives (12 in Vojvodina and 10 in Kosovo and Metohija), with over 27,000 meters of archive materials. These archives have over 12,000 users per year, and in addition each year they organize some 200 exhibitions and lectures, with a total audience of 300-400,000.

Just as we do not have buildings built specifically for libraries and museums, the same holds for archives. We even lack appropriate reception centers in municipi-

palties and districts, for preparing materials before sending them to archives. The tasks of reception and storing, ordering and selection, conservation and protection are largely neglected, serving as a good indicator of the current status and equippedness of archives. In these politically unstable times, when numerous institutions, state agencies and general administration departments disappear, and many institutions start anew, archival materials are often thoughtlessly destroyed (as it happened in Kosovo). We also lack systematic buying up and collecting materials in private ownership, scientific processing of materials and its publication. Adequate training of archive personnel remains an open issue. It is necessary to continue developing specialized archives, as fields of scholarly and educational work, where we have already achieved remarkable results (for example, the archive of the Yugoslav Film Library, which possesses 70,000 stored, processed and catalogued films).

MUSEUMS

Serbia still lacks modern, well furnished museums, with appropriate work space and expert teams. There is a comparatively developed network of museums - there are 122 of them (31 in Vojvodina and 9 in Kosovo and Metohija). Among them, the most numerous are so-called complex museums (49), social history ones (37), art ones (27), economic and technical (5) and natural history ones (4). Each year these museums are visited by an average total of 3.190,000 people (1988 figure), but the number of visitors has been on the decline since 1982. On the average, in Vojvodina every third inhabitant visits a museum once a year, in central Serbia every second, and in Kosovo-Metohija every 28th. The number of inventoried objects in all the museums amounts to over three million, and only 4 percent is exhibited. There are 1,424 employees in various museums, with 31 percent scholars among them, 14 percent expert personnel, 9 percent educators and guides, 8 percent technical personnel and 38 percent the rest. Like in the case of publishing houses and other institutions, administrative personnel is a heavy burden. The largest number of museums are located in Belgrade (38), then in Bačka District (19), Timok (12) and Šumadija Districts (9).

Museums are on the margins of cultural policy: there are no investments into them, they subsist in shortages of all kinds, and are most often managed by former so-called political activists. Their actual and territorial competencies are uneven, their tasks and collections often overlap, they are professionally fragmented and closed, their projects lag considerably behind time, their collections include many uncatalogued and unprocessed objects. Lacking good experts and conservation workshops they are not able to restore and preserve even such supreme national values as the Gospel of Miroslav. The Historical Museum of Serbia still does not have its own rooms, and the Natural History Museum in Belgrade (founded more than a century ago) has been vegetating in a cramped and dilapidated house for decades. Scholarly work is waning, and public relations activities are a true rarity, just as the cooperation between museums and educational institutions. Without up-to-date museology, highly qualified and imaginative management and advertising, without public funds and sponsors, our museums will not be able to get out of the crisis which has been pressing upon them for years.

INSTITUTES FOR THE PRESERVATION OF CULTURAL MONUMENTS

There are 15 institutes for the preservation of cultural monuments in Serbia (regional ones, and the republic one in Belgrade), located in larger regional centers (Valjevo, Kraljevo, Niš, Kragujevac, etc). Their tasks and competencies are regulated by the 1990 Law on Cultural Values. In these institutions, too, the shortage of money and experts takes its tribute, in spite of the fact that the preservation of cultural values is a priority of the current Ministry of Culture. Maximum effort is being invested in the preservation of the most important mobile and real estate values, especially those listed among the World Cultural Heritage items (Stari Ras with the Sopoćani monastery, the Studenica Monastery). This must be reflected both in the territorial and in the general development plans of the Republic, on the one hand, and in development plans at the municipal and district levels. We need the modernization of technical equipment of these institutions, a unified, computerized information system on the preservation of cultural monuments, bet-

ter planning and urgent conservative-restaurative interventions, elaborate conception of the presentation of our cultural heritage, etc. Timely recording and inspection are imperative in these matters. Due to poorly performed conservation work even the roof of the Studenica church leaked in 1991. In addition, restaurants and tourist facilities in the close vicinity of the monastery devastate the whole Studenica complex.

In central Serbia there are currently 1,200 cultural goods listed in the central register (places of historical significance, archeological sites, cultural monuments, real estate cultural values and so-called spatial cultural-historical unities); several hundreds of them still wait for the procedure to be finished. The procedure is quite slow, since in these matters the largest competencies belong to municipal assemblies, which decide about proclaiming particular real estate cultural goods as cultural monuments, as well as about protection measures and ways of using cultural goods. There is a lot of ignorance and arbitrariness in all this business, and we have seen many demolishments, reconstructions, rebuildings, diggings and similar actions which violate cultural monuments, together with the inefficiency of municipal authorities to prevent these violations.

INSTITUTES FOR THE PRESERVATION OF NATURE

One republican and two provincial institutes for the preservation of nature care for 1,116 natural values and protected natural complexes. Among these are 5 national parks, 20 regional parks, 114 natural preserves, 345 natural monuments, 33 memorial natural monuments, 14 real estate cultural values, 23 units of landscape architecture, 6 woods, numerous natural rarities (73 plant species, 379 animal species) etc. Our times are characterized by a growing awareness of the deep intertwinings between cultural values, civilization patterns, habitat and natural environment, and development and ecology must converge in the greatest possible degree; thus these institutions deserve our maximum help and support.

THEATERS

For quite some time (since 1955) the number of professional theaters in Serbia has been constant - 26 (6

in Vojvodina, 2 in Kosovo-Metohija). The total number of seats in them is 11,417, the number of performances per year 4,300, with an audience of 123,000. There are 2,729 people employed in them (including members of the Opera and the Ballet, where they share the same building with theaters), and among those 1,361 people are engaged in administrative and technical jobs. Serbia has 68 amateur theaters (37 in Vojvodina, 5 in Kosovo-Metohija), with a total membership of 2,736 and yearly output of 1,300 performances, with 292,000 viewers (note - a figure twice as high as that for professional theaters). This number has not changed since 1985. But the number of children's theaters has been diminishing, which is a reason to worry. Today there are only 8 (3 in Vojvodina and 5 in central Serbia), and only two of them are puppet ones. In Kosovo and Metohija, there are none. These theaters give 1,864 performances each year which attract up to 439,000 viewers - a grateful audience, but one forgot by cultural policy-makers.

From these data the crisis of our theater institutions can be gleaned. Within central Serbia, with about 5 million inhabitants, only 8 professional theaters are active (in Šabac, Kruševac, Niš, Zaječar, Pirot, Leskovac, Kragujevac and Užice), and among their actors only 8 are theater academy graduates. Kolubara and Raška districts have neither professional nor amateur theaters. The city of Vranje has only an amateur one. Kosovo and Metohija have long been neglected in this respect by cultural policy. Our theaters are inert, narcissistic institutions, with insufficient sensitivity for the audience. It is estimated that current theater audience in Serbia consists of only 2-3 percent of the total population of the Republic (which, in Belgrade, amounts to 35,000 people). That means a lot of money for such a handful of people, since state subsidies are still the dominant form of financing theaters. In the developed world, the state generally does not cover more than a third of a theater's costs, and theaters themselves must cover the rest - through winning new audiences, developing advertising, sponsorship, etc. In Belgrade the Gardoš Theater is currently the only independent and autonomous theater, subsisting by its own resources and generous sponsorship by the Zemun Dairy.

Theaters rarely give guest performances in other theater houses, there is little exchange of programs among them. They are internally damaged by large bureaucratic, administrative apparatuses and the rule of guaranteed employment for all actors, including poorly talented ones - although contract arrangements with actors, directors and all other artistic contributors for particular shows represents a more productive model of labor relations in such institutions. There is a shortage of directors, so that actors themselves occasionally engage in directing. Theaters out of Belgrade suffer from the shortage of trained actors. The mode of organization in these institutions is utterly conservative, management usually poorly qualified, and for decades there have been no investments in new buildings and equipment.

MUSIC

The axis of musical life in Serbia consists of five symphony orchestras - philharmonics, located in Belgrade, Novi Sad and Niš, with the newly established Borislav Pašćan Youth Philharmonic (also in Belgrade) as the most recent effort of this kind. These are extremely expensive institutions, whose survival is impossible without public, state subsidies. In times of shortage, like ours are, it is not surprising that the orchestra of the Belgrade Opera and Ballet is on strike because of the shortage of reproduction material and instruments. A set of strings for contrabass, for example, costs 160 German marks, and in order to have them sound properly they should be replaced every three months. All that must be paid for from the salary of orchestra members, which does not even reach 100 marks. As the Belgrade Philharmonic soloist V. Draškoci says (in "Politika", June 6, 1992): "We go on playing on the same strings until they start looking like rope".

There are enough musicians, but not orchestras - that is, it is difficult to gather an orchestra of appropriate size and composition. Musical artists mostly stay in Belgrade and refuse to work in other cities. They are most affected by poverty, high prices and lack of instruments and equipment. Each of them plays his/her own instrument, whose quality is determined by the owner's buying power, and all of them were bought from various suppliers, which considerably reduces the quality of the joint

performance. Thus it happens that even an "accurately performed symphony concert is declared to be a first-rate musical event" (V.Stefanović, "Politika", June 1, 1992). There is a shortage of orchestra conductors, who should be engaged through contract for particular programs, instead of the permanent employment arrangement we have now. The same holds for all other kinds of musical artists. Serbia also lacks printed scores, records and cassette-tapes of classical music by national composers. Musical publishing is barely noticeable, instead of taking care of important works of our musical heritage and the best contemporary achievements from abroad. There is no systematic support for talents, nor enough encouragement to young artists and national musical authors. The Ministry of Culture is supposed to have a developed conception of musical life. In the broadcasting system, music is still kept in a kind of ghetto and relegated to a subordinate track (except the "Stereorama" program and the Radio-Belgrade Third Program).

Serbia also lacks elementary and secondary musical schools, particularly in smaller towns. There is one musical school per 140,000 inhabitants, as opposed to 25,000, as recommended by the UNESCO. In most towns, such schools are the only centers of cultural life. In Belgrade there are 11 such schools, but even they do not dispose of appropriate work conditions.

There are two opera houses, in Belgrade and Novi Sad, and some experts believe such institutions could survive in Niš and Priština as well. Serbia currently has two ballet ensembles (in Belgrade and Novi Sad). Both kinds of art have long been in crisis: poverty, staff crisis, crisis in artistic training. There are also expensive premieres, with expensive scenic equipment and unrational use of the existing holdings, absence of competition among artists, inadequate choreography, etc. Thus the ballet ensemble of the National Theater in Belgrade has about 100 dancers, and almost all of them are soloists. The Lujo Davičo Ballet School in Belgrade - the main center and source of new generations of ballet dancers - for decades has not had its own, appropriate building and adequate work conditions. Some critics also hold that the whole system of ballet education is undeveloped and poorly organized.

Some 5 or 6 concert agencies (including those newer, private ones, but also the "Jugokonzert" Agency, active since 1923) give their best to organize performances by national and foreign artists here and abroad, but their noble efforts are denied appropriate public support so that they mostly rely on their own resources. The consequence of all the listed problems is a long-term crisis of the audience and the absence of new audiences, especially among the young.

CINEMA

Starting with the year 1980, the size of home cinema production, number of movie theaters and size of their audiences have been shrinking. Before that, average 10-15 films were made each year, and in the year 1992 we will barely have 5-6 home-made movies, and those thanks exclusively to private producers. Former large producing and distributing enterprises from the public ("state") sector (like, for example, "Avala Film") have collapsed. Our biggest cinema manifestation, the Belgrade FEST (film festival) was in 1992 made possible by private movie and video distributors. The latest statistics show that in Serbia there are 456 movie theaters, with 165,635 seats and 188,238 shows yearly. The number of viewers is about 20 million each year. Currently the average level of utilization is 19 percent, and the number of viewers about 147 per 100 inhabitants (over five years of age).

Some insight into the neglect of our cinema network can be gained by the fact that some 40 percent of municipalities have only one cinema, and there are some without any. Belgrade once had 50 movie houses, today only 15 are active, and among them only two ("Balkan" and the Film Library) can be said to be cultivated. In earlier times the most popular movies had up to 300,000 viewers in Belgrade, today that figure is ten times lower. Certainly, the expansion of the video and TV diminishes cinema audience, but among other factors are inadequate theaters with their limited technical possibilities (which are below the minimum standards and sometimes are not even equipped for the dolby-stereo system), and high taxes on the cinema ticket. Most projectors in these theaters were manufactured between 1951 and 1980, that is, they have long been outdated technologically. Distributors do

not have enough foreign currency to pay for copyrights and import movies, so that they either disappear ("Beograd Film", for example), or choose to offer us poor repertoire and a flood of porno movies in leading theaters. New, so-called independent distributors emerge, who - having reaped money through video pirating - started importing movies and developing their own distribution networks, unburdened by unnecessary administrative personnel and thus more efficient than that in the public sector. Another contribution to the crisis of the cinema and the shrinking of the cinema network has come from unrational fiscal policy: for years cinemas and home movie producers have been heavily taxed. Due to those taxes half of all the money devoted to making a movie goes to covering the costs of the tape. High quality film tape is imported, with high custom taxes, which is one of the reasons we do not have enough copies of national movies. The same shortage also stimulates video pirating. The national cinema is in any case unprofitable, since it cannot cover its own costs. That is why it is necessary to create public funds for financing national cinema production, obliging both television and video club owners to contribute to those funds. Modernization of the cinema network can also be financed from resources collected through video tapes lease.

VISUAL ARTS

Some 200 permanent exhibition and sale galleries in Serbia are not sufficient to deal with the whole output of our visual arts (and often applied ones as well). Such galleries are seldom independent institutions and mostly operate as parts of the existing cultural centers, houses of culture, museums, libraries, etc. Buildings built purposefully for galleries are rare, and exhibition space is most often acquired through more or less successful adaptations or improvisations. For one's turn in exhibition galleries in larger cities one has to wait for a year or two. Here, too, metropolization takes its tribute. Most visual artists live in Belgrade, where in some 70 sale and exhibition galleries 5-7 exhibitions are given each day, or about 2,000 exhibitions per year (each gallery organizes an average of 2 exhibitions each month). The last decade (since 1982) has been marked by the invasion of private galleries, which dominate the visual arts market. Harsh

tax policy forces them to depart from their basic activity and start selling books, paper, clothes, products of applied arts, antiques, etc. National museums and galleries are almost absent from the visual arts market, since they cannot afford to complete their collections through buying the best works offered.

A valuable network of visual arts institutions is embodied in visual arts colonies and sculptors symposia. In Serbia there are about 40 of them (15 in Vojvodina, 2 in Kosovo-Metohija), with most diverse profiles (painting, graphics, ceramics, sculpture; in villages, in factories, in cities, etc). This century-old tradition of getting artists live and work together, known in all parts of Serbia, represents an important factor in professional communication and expansion of visual culture. It is mostly financed by local communities and local sponsors. For over three decades these activities have been covered by a specialized research-documentation institution called the Visual Arts Meeting in Subotica, with its valuable data bases and published monographs.

What disturbs most in visual arts is the absence of scholarly and research work in our museums and galleries and the passivity of publishers in presenting national visual arts heritage and contemporary creativity (through monographs, catalogues, reproductions, etc).

RADIO AND TELEVISION

Cultural policy usually leaves out radio and television, in spite of the fact that they represent a powerful "cultural industry", large producers and consumers of musical, drama, cultural, information and educational programs. State monopoly over radio and TV reigning for several decades, which placed them under the auspices of information departments of the state apparatus, has resulted in the lack of awareness that these institutions are powerful means of culture and arts. Modern culture is essentially marked exactly by an enormous expansion of audio-visual media, and in our case the full swing of cable and satellite television, local radio and TV is still ahead. In Serbia today there are over 60 radio stations (20 in Vojvodina, 7 in Kosovo-Metohija), with over 200,000 hours of broadcast program of their own. There are 1.936,000 radio-subscribers, that is, 19 sub-

scribers per 100 inhabitants (but note that the figures are surely higher, since the statistics records only registered subscriptions). The boom of the local radio is obvious, but unfortunately it has not been followed by the expansion of high quality cultural programs. Commercialized, "new" folk music dominates, with its vulgar "hit" and "folk parades". An honorable exception and a significant cultural effort in broadcasting is Radio Belgrade Third Program, started in 1965, which daily broadcasts four hours of excellent program.

At the beginning of 1992 the three TV centers in Serbia (Belgrade, Novi Sad and Priština) were unified into a single organization called the Television of Serbia, under the patronage of the state. This network has a total of 1.8 million subscribers, out of which 1,6 million are households (a million in central Serbia, half a million in Vojvodina, the rest in Kosovo-Metohija). On the average, there is one TV set per 1.6 households. The latest legal regulation provides in principle for the foundation of private, independent TV stations, but this process is greatly hindered by political discretion. At this moment, the fact remains that on Serbian TV more program hours are devoted to commercials and advertising than to cultural and educational programs. Television should always be under the close scrutiny of cultural policy and cultural public, since kitsch and excessive commercialization of the program essentially lower value standards and deform cultural needs of the million-sized audience.

It is to be expected that radio and TV will increasingly engage in broadcasting and distributing programs, at the cost of their manufacturing. They will increasingly turn to program market, where they will take over, buy and commission programs from other cultural institutions and agencies. A well-thought, rational cultural policy must have insight into who is doing what in this kind of production (from musical, drama, children s, to scientific and educational programs). In order to step out of its inertia and avoid being suffocated by the growing administrative-technical apparatus, our TV will have to be more and more a distributor of programs, reducing its own production.

CULTURAL CENTER
AND HOUSES OF CULTURE

The notion of cultural democracy or the participation of citizens in cultural life - either as creators or as consumers of cultural programs and creations - is hardly imaginable without a developed network of cultural centers or houses of culture. In former times, these centers had basically an educational function (like in the case of the so-called workers and people's universities), or served as nuclei for the diffusion of elementary cultural programs and the satisfaction of basic cultural needs (like village cooperatives and village houses of culture). They had their peak during the seventies, when the Community of Culture financed the construction or adaptation of 60 new buildings. There is no municipality in Serbia without such institutions, which is not to say there should not be one in each larger settlement. They are devoted to all social strata and age-grades (workers, peasants, children, young people, students) and offer all kinds of programs: educational (general and specialized education, foreign language courses, etc), cultural (musical, movie, theater and other performances), exhibitional, clubs (cinema clubs, literary societies, societies for visual arts, etc), recreational and sports programs. In addition, they serve as animators of the local cultural environment, encourage amateurs to engage in cultural and artistic activities and organize guest performances. Quite often they also include a library, movie theater, all-purpose hall, local radio-station, publishing, etc.

In the year 1988 there were 98 workers and people's universities in Serbia. Since then the number has dropped, due in part to the economic crisis, but also to a kind of identity crisis these institutions are undergoing, caused by changes in schooling system and the loss of support from former founders (eg. unions). Under the rubric "Houses of Culture", the latest statistics registers 281 institutions. On the average, the services of these two types of institutions were used by 5 million inhabitants of Serbia each year.

Nowadays, the trend has been for this basic infrastructure in Serbia's culture to become a kind of multi-purpose institutions or centers, characterized by a wide diversity of offered programs, forms of professional or-

ganization and modes of stimulating cultural life, as well as by the commercialization of its programs. In Belgrade, such institutions are, for example, the "Sava" Center, Kolarac People's University, Student Cultural Center, "Studentski grad" House of Culture, Labor Union House, Pioneers's House, Belgrade Cultural Center, Belgrade Youth House, Đuro Salaj Workers University, etc.

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At the end of this condensed summary, which necessarily leaves out many other institutional forms of culture (for example, cultural and artistic manifestations and festivals, institutions for international cultural cooperation, state agencies dealing with cultural policy, artistic education, cultural and artistic periodicals, etc), we can draw some conclusions.

A critical view of the past and in the present always involves a perspective on the future. For that reason any notion of social development must include an elaborate conception of the development of culture, its institutions and its material presuppositions. Serbia does have culture, but it lacks well-thought cultural policy. We are threatened by a policy of status quo ante, by shortsighted leaders, by a repetition of the historical experience which measures the future by the criteria of the past or, at best, routinely extrapolates the present. An essential precondition for a new turning-point in the policy of cultural development is the very act of getting ourselves to think about new parameters of cultural policy. Here we mean, above all, the urgent demand to expand the low material base of cultural development, to bring the participation of culture and cultural institutions in the GNP at least to the level of one percent. There is a necessity for new investments in work space, new buildings for cultural institutions, in the stimulation of the production process in publishing houses, cinema, bookstores, museology, etc, in new supplies of equipment and better staff training. Furthermore, it is necessary to reduce and overcome territorial differences and inequalities in the cultural institutions network (particularly in the south of Serbia, in Kosovo-Metohija, in the country - especially in the highlands), to stop the process of metropolization

and establish new balances along the centralism-autonomy line in the sphere of cultural institutions.

Changes in society and the new role of the state in public services will also require a critical examination of the concept of etatization in cultural policy, the construction of a new model of organization of state agencies dealing with the problems of culture (starting with municipalities, to districts, to the Republic). Better cooperation and complementarity between public and private sectors in the cultural domain are needed, and in the same spirit, new forms for cultural policy instruments (such as legislative, fiscal policy, investments and financing). Models of internal organization of cultural institutions will also have to change, as well as their operation and management procedures, directed to the demands of a rational and efficient, productive behavior, with a growing openness to market mechanisms, to new sensitivities and new cultural needs of the generations to come.

Translated by Ivana Spasić

