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MILIVOJE TRKLJA

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# HOW TO FINANCE CULTURE

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In the field of financing cultural activities, as elsewhere, there is not only the question of society's material possibilities and the maximum efforts it can make for cultural development, but also the problem of how to engage the available resources for culture, how to form means, to allocate them in given fields and branches of culture and make an adequate territorial allocation, how to use them and how to ensure optimal effects with the available means in terms of fulfilling given cultural needs. Here, however, we have no universal solutions, nor can we have, given the various differences in material, social, institutional and other conditions. We have no universal solution even with respect to the most general principle.

Practical experience in Yugoslavia has unequivocally shown that a method of financing culture can produce optimal effects only if it corresponds with the dominant type of relation in the material sphere, with the aims of cultural policy and the functions of culture in the economy and in society. Both budgetary and market methods have proven to be totally inadequate for our conditions, demands and needs. Namely, the application of these methods in practise has shown several such negative effects, both in the sphere of the „production” of cultural goods and services and the fulfillment of cultural needs, and in the field of rational and effective use of the available resources, so that entirely different solutions had to be sought.

Practise has shown that the application of the budgetary method, and generally etatistic instruments of financing culture, means and conditions:

— the forced seizure of means for culture from the creators of these means and thus the alienation of the fruits of their labour from their cultural needs and interests;

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— opposition between the interests of the „producer“ of culture and the subjects from whom the means for culture are seized to antagonistic proportions;

— the passive position and meaningless role of the creator of the means for culture in cultural policy;

— subjectivism, bureaucracy, schematism and arbitrariness in evaluating the material needs of culture and its development, and the conditions of its reproduction;

— alienation of the cultural activities and artistic creation from the needs and interests of those subjects who provide the means for culture from the results of their labour and their manifestation as goals unto themselves and functions of etatistic goals;

— the unstable and uncertain flow of resources to cultural institutions, resulting from their formation as a function of etatistic interests and view on the structure of social needs;

— the division between the scope, structure, content and forms of cultural activity and „production“ of cultural goods and services and the real needs for their use, with pronounced hermetic elements and institutionalism in cultural and artistic creativity;

— unrational and uneconomic use of the available resources and capacities in culture and a weak rise in the productivity and effectiveness of labour, etc.

On the other hand, the market method in the financing of culture is not even possible to apply in the way and to the extent it is applied in the material sphere, given the obvious specific aspects of culture with respect to the nature of work, conditions and factors of cultural and artistic creativity and aims of cultural activity; the conditions and ways of using and effecting cultural achievements; the nature, ways of expression and satisfaction of cultural needs; the organization of work and institutional forms of work in culture; the conditions and ways of presenting cultural achievements to the benefactors, etc. The sole and relatively limited application of the market method in financing culture gives rise to many negative effects, such as: reducing the level of cultural and artistic creativity in a qualitative sense, impoverishing forms of cultural activity and narrowing down the sources of cultural values, with a highly

pronounced emergence of kitsch and low-value cultural achievements. The impossibility for the poorer social strata to benefit from the most valuable cultural achievements, i. e. the most expensive cultural goods and services, in financing culture through the market method means excluding an „unprivileged” form of financing culture and the satisfaction of the cultural needs of only the „privileged” members of society. The market method also gives rise to structural disproportions in the „production” of cultural goods and services, between urban and rural areas and developed and under-developed regions of the country.

Parallel with the processes of de-etatizing decision-making in the economy, and in culture, establishing and expanding self-management to all fields of the system of social reproduction and social life in general, radically different forms emerged in the financing of culture in contrast with market and budgetary forms. Their distinguishing feature is the direct nature of the relationship between culture and those who benefit from its services and the democratic nature of decision-making on cultural and artistic creativity and resources for work in culture. On the basis of these positive experiences, and of the negative experiences in applying the etatistic and market methods, an awareness grew, and this has been given adequate expression in the new constitutional system, of the possibilities and need for establishing a free exchange of work as the dominant method of financing cultural activities.

The main feature of this new method lies in the conscious regulation of relations between culture and the beneficiaries of its services, void of any force and anyone's domination, mediation or patronage. A free exchange of work means organizing and realizing the „production” of cultural goods and services for an à priori known circle of beneficiaries. Thus, its rudimentary condition is the rational organization of cultural activity, regulated consciously and democratically according to volume, content, structure, scope, conditions and functions, on the basis of the equally consciously determined scope, content and structure of cultural needs and the material possibilities for fulfilling them.

Regardless of the fact that it is carried out via monetary forms, the essential feature of the free exchange of labour lies in its direct relationships. The „production” of cultural goods and services is a direct function of cultural needs. It is organized and effected on the basis

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of the previously established scope and content of cultural needs within the context of given material possibilities and interests in terms of the extent to which available material resources are engaged in fulfilling cultural needs.

In keeping with the concept and essence of the free exchange of work, self-management agreements and social consensus form a specific aspect of regulating relations within this exchange. The basic characteristics of this form are: the equality of the partners, the democratic nature and directness of decision-making and expressing their authentic needs, interests and possibilities. Similarly, self-management communities of interest are an essential component and basic institutional form of the free exchange of work. This kind of exchange is impossible without such institutional forms within the frameworks of which expression is given to the possibilities and interests in the sphere of „producing“ cultural goods and services on the one hand, and the possibilities and interests in the sphere of the „consumption“ of these goods and services and the satisfaction of cultural needs, on the other, based on the principle of solidarity. Under contemporary, highly complex and developed conditions in the „production“ of cultural achievements and generally in cultural activities, where we have numerous cultural institutions within the same branches of culture and numerous and varied beneficiaries of cultural values, it is not possible rationally to organize cultural activities for a priori determined beneficiaries and beforehand defined cultural needs, unless there are adequate institutional forms in which agreement can be reached and carried out on the fundamental questions pertaining to both cultural activities and the cultural needs and material conditions for satisfying them and unless various, often contradictory interests and demands are dovetailed, and common interests and the criteria and forms of their realization defined. Communities of interest represent institutional forms, established on the delegation principle out of the circle of workers in culture and the beneficiaries of cultural achievements as well as other interested subjects for culture, especially workers from the material sphere, for defining programmes of cultural activity, the scope, structure and costs of work in culture, on the one hand, and scope, sources, criteria and ways to set aside means for culture, on the other.

The free exchange of work, however, does not mean a negation of any market pressure and any state regulatives in the sphere of financing culture. Namely, it is imperative and justified

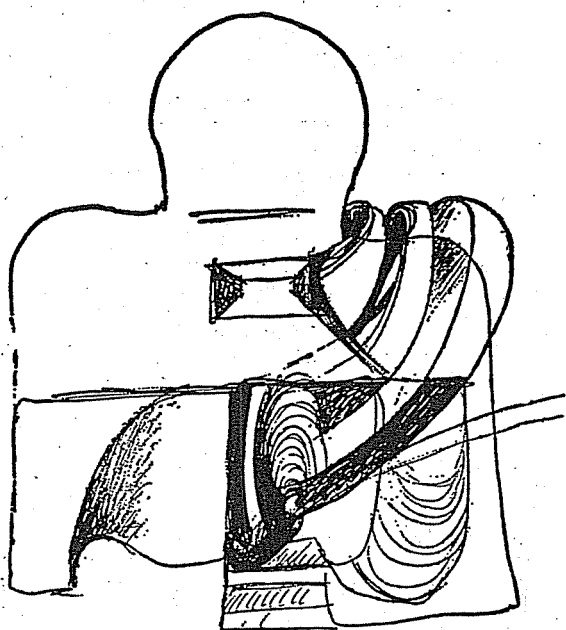
to use certain market criteria, instruments and mechanisms in defining both those questions pertaining to the „production” of cultural goods and services, as well as those concerning cultural needs and the „consumption” of cultural achievements.

Even in the system of the free exchange of work, the market is of special importance for as objective a definition and determination as possible of the costs of work in culture, the prices of cultural goods and services, the technical and cadre level of work in cultural institutions and ties between culture and its benefactors. We found the experience of other countries to be of great use in settling these and other acute questions in Yugoslavia.

In the system of the free exchange of work, the state ceases to be a direct and decisive factor in financing culture. Its role remains very important, however, in dovetailing and effecting general relations, trends and conditions in financing culture. Thus, the function of the state becomes essential and very significant in dovetailing apportionments for culture with the general volume of social means and social needs, in determining the sources of these means, the instruments for forming means used by communities of interest and in ensuring the realization of general and particular social interests in cultural development and the fulfillment of cultural needs. Certain measures, instruments and actions by states in the sphere of financing culture, in use in other countries, can be very interesting and important for our circumstances in finding adequate solutions within our system of financing culture.

Generally speaking, there is great theoretical and practical interest in Yugoslavia in studying the experiences of other countries concerning all questions from the domaine of financing culture. Given the differences in the real conditions for financing culture, certain state or market instruments, which can be assessed as highly positive from the standpoint of their effects, can be inapplicable to our conditions or prove to be entirely unsuitable. And the reverse can happen. It is our opinion that one should learn as much as possible about the experiences of all, observe them critically and judge what could apply to our social, material and other conditions, and adopt it regardless of whose „invention” or experience it is. Hence, this meeting can only be of benefit and it would be a good thing to strive towards the organization of as frequent as possible exchanges of experience and considerations of relevant problems

in financing culture in as varied forms as possible. It would be good to undertake a comparative research on the financing of culture through joint efforts and in jointly organized forms, especially under the auspices of the United Nations.



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