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FORMS OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO CREATION

The topic assigned to me, „forms of financial assistance to creation”, can be handled either broadly or narrowly depending on how the term „creation” is understood in this context. „Creation” can be taken to mean creative artistic activity proper, art at the professional level and those who engage in producing such art. In another way of looking at it „creativity” is a quality which appears in different ways in every individual and every individual has the right to realize this quality in himself. To the extent that the latter broad meaning of creation is taken as the starting-point, the topic comprises not only support for professional artists as such but also support given to participation in art in all of its different forms. I shall analyze the topic primarily from the standpoint of art at the professional level but I shall also touch upon the problems of engaging in art at the amateur level.

To start with I shall describe the system of support for creative artistic activity in Finland, my home country, indicating the good points and bad points that I myself am most aware of. Then it is my intention to analyze the topic from a somewhat more theoretical standpoint and to attempt to discern in it certain more general problems. Since for social, historical and economic reasons the circumstances in different countries differ greatly in their impact on cultural policy and cultural affairs administration, it appears to be appropriate to conduct the discussion on a comparatively general and fundamental level.

GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FOR ARTISTS
IN FINLAND

Measures for the support of artists can be divided roughly into direct measures and indirect measures. Direct measures give support to artists in the form of individual grants, assistance of one sort or another or pensions. Indirect support measures are for increasing the sale and distribution of the products of artistic work — paintings, musical compositions, books and so forth — for providing work-opportunities for artists or for improving the actual physical working conditions of the artists, for example by providing work-space, tools and materials. One noteworthy form of direct support is the maintenance by society of the various institutions devoted to the arts — theaters, symphony orchestras, art schools and art institutes — which provide employment for thousands of creative and performing artists, in particular for musicians and actors.

Direct support

The most significant form of direct support for art in Finland is the State system for grants to artists, which is based on a law which came into effect in 1969. Nine fixed-term professorships have been established for artists under this law and these posts have been filled by prominent representatives of different fields of art. Every year, on the basis of this law, a total of 104 artist-grants are distributed to artists in different fields of art. The grants can be for 5-years, 3-years or one year. The distributions of grants each year is in accordance with the following table:

Branch	One year grants	Three year grants	Five year grants	Branch	One year grants	Three year grants	Five year grants
Total	104	23	9	Actors	22	1	—
Authors	18	6	3	Dancers	5	—	—
Translators	4	1	—	Architects	4	1	—
Visual artists	14	7	5	Designers	5	1	—
Composers	4	3	1	and film			
Performing				artists	7	1	—
musicians	16	2	—	Critics	5	—	—

The grants are tax-free, are tied in with the State salary classifications and are paid to the artists monthly. The State grants for artists are allocated by the state Arts Commit-

tees. There are seven of these committees, one for each field of the arts. The committees are made up of artists and experts in the field of the particular art. The grants awarded to individual artists are supplemented by so-called „project-grants” which can be awarded either to one artist or to a work-group composed of a number of artists in order to help them to effectuate a definite planned program, for example producing a short film, preparing for a concert, or organizing an exhibition. A project-grant can also be awarded for the tools and supplies needed to work in the art, for example to procure an instrument or to pay for the costs of casting a sculpture in bronze. The project-grants are awarded by the Central Arts Committee which also decides how large each grant is to be. The amount of money allocated each year as project-grants is equivalent to at least 40 artist-grants.

In addition to the State Art Committees which are subordinate to the Ministry of Education, there is provision by law for the support of artists by the Art Committees of the Provinces, there being one committee in each of the 11 provinces of the country. These committees award both artist-grants and project-grants to artists active in the respective province. The sums appropriated for distribution by the Arts Committees of the provinces have increased rapidly within the last few years.

An experiment which may be of particular interest has been in progress in Finland since 1972 — the so-called „province-artists” experiment. There are now about 30 „province-artists” within the framework of the experiment. Each of these artists receives a salary which is provided half by the Arts Committees of the province and half by the local community within which the artist resides. Among the duties of the province-artist is to provide instruction and guidance for people interested in engaging in art and to arrange appropriate art-activities. The province-artist is also expected to be able to devote some time in peace to his own personal art-activity, during his so-called „creative period”. The artists who have been appointed province-artists have been representatives of different fields of art — most of them have been painters or sculptors, or writers.

Forms of indirect support

Compared with the system of artist-grants, the forms of indirect support for art in our country are just at the beginning of their deve-

lopment. The oldest examples are to be found in the field of the visual arts — painting and sculpture and graphic art. For a long time now painters and sculptors have been supported by society through the purchase of their works with public funds. Such purchases are made not only by art museums but by the State and communities purchasing works for their own collections and for public buildings. Certain sums are provided for these purposes annually in the various governmental budgets. Another form of indirect support for painters and sculptors is given by the State's participation in meeting the costs for building atelier-buildings. A sum for this purpose is provided by the State budget. For a number of years now the State has actively supported the domestic production of movies. The State grants aid in advance for the production of films and also awards prizes to films which have met standards of quality.

Within the last few years there have been attempts to plan and experiment with new forms of indirect support in other fields of art. In the music field the State, together with the National Copyright Office, has established a fund which supports the publication of modern Finnish music, as well as the costs of making fair-copies and recordings. Assistance is also given for the commissioning of compositions. The State maintains a Concert Booking Agency, in order to provide employment opportunities for music-performers. For the time being, this agency is concentrating primarily on schools (in Sweden and in Norway corresponding concert activity has assumed considerable proportions).

In the field of literature there is a plan for the so-called „support-purchase” system. According to the plan, the State will support literature which does not have wide distribution but which is, nevertheless, important in terms of its content by procuring a part of the edition of the work for public use.

Support for amateur activity

Support for those engaged in the practise of an art has traditionally been effected by the State granting annual financial assistance to organizations of those interested in and engaging in the said art. Organizational life in Finland is extraordinarily active — it has been said that Finland is the „promised-land of associations”. There are also many organizations active in the field of art at the amateur level. These organizations divide up the field of the art

on the basis of political viewpoints and territorial considerations. The financial assistance awarded to these organizations amounts to many millions of marks.

There are many advantages involved in giving support to organizations. Organizational activity starts from the activity of ordinary citizens themselves and a great deal of volunteer-work is done within the framework of such organizations. Of late, however, it has been observed that in addition to support of the organization other forms of support of art at the amateur level should be developed. It has been noted that not even in the promised-land of organizations does organizational activity cover all those who are interested in engaging in art. Certainly, the most active participants in the arts can be reached through such organizations, but not those whose interest in the art is just beginning to germinate or whose interest in the field has yet to be aroused. In addition, organizational life was especially kindled by the enthusiasm of group amateur activity at the turn of the century, examples being choirs and bands, while the more current pop-music and jazz-music enthusiasts function in temporary and shifting agglomerations and do not feel the need to found associations.

In recent years an attempt has been made in supporting the activity of amateurs to aim at the sort of measures by means of which adequate frameworks for engaging in art can be created for the entire people. In a report presented at the beginning of this year a parliamentary committee proposed a local-community law regarding cultural affairs by means of which the local communities (numbering almost 500) will be able to obtain considerable state aid for compensating cultural-activity directors, meeting the costs of premises and equipment for cultural activity, organizing exhibitions and presentations of amateur art, and supporting the activity of local amateur organizations and bodies.

VIEWPOINTS AND PROBLEMS RELATED TO CREATIVE ARTISTIC ACTIVITY

I have presented with perhaps too much detail the system for the support of artists and art-amateurs in my country. Now, I shall attempt to distinguish some of the inequities and problems of the Finnish system, and I hope that there will be at least some points of contact with the discussion of the theme in other countries. For the sake of clarity, the

topics are numbered. This however signifies nothing other than a division of the topics to make their consideration easier. The problems are for the most part intertwined among themselves and they can be looked at in many different ways.

The total amount of the appropriations directed to the support of artists and their relative proportion in terms of all cultural appropriations

In all societies it appears that there are fewer cultural appropriations available than are needed. Thus the consideration arises as to how great a part of these appropriations should be aimed at the direct and indirect support of artists. To put it more pointedly, the question arises as to taking a stand with respect to how much society views itself as needing artists and their works. Are all who want to function as artists to be granted the financial possibilities of doing so? The question is primarily theoretical, but the principle is interesting. In any case, it is clear that supporting artistic „new-production” when there are insufficient publication and presentation possibilities for the currently produced products is not a sensible cultural policy.

Pressuring for direct and indirect forms of support

It is clear that in the support of artists in many countries there is vigorous pressure for direct forms of support, primarily for individual grants. These are adapted particularly well to those artist-groups for which they have obviously been originally intended, namely writers, composers and artists (painters and sculptors). On the other hand, it is clear that, if they are planned correctly, there are a number of advantages to indirect forms of support. For example, building atelier-premises and other work-space with public funds can be of use to more artists. Similarly, support measures directed at the results of the work of artists, at books, paintings, compositions, films et cetera imply an increase and an enrichment of the art services available to the public.

The differentiation of support measures in accordance with the different fields of art and forms of functioning

There has been perhaps too much of an attempt in the subvention of art to apply the same solutions to all fields of art and to different forms of functioning. Certainly this

has its advantages: the system is simple and clear and its administration is easy. Such a system, however, rarely does justice to the real needs of the different fields of art. I will cite an example. In Finland, in accordance with the prevailing system of grants, practitioners of the motion picture art get the same kind of individual grants as other artists. However, producing a film is group-work in which the proportion of equipment and material costs is considerable. It would be more sensible to channel support to meet such costs — and salaries — for example through the mediation of work-groups and the firms of the field than through individual grants.

Staggering artist-grants and other support according to the other income of artists

A governmental grant is traditionally held to be society's recognition or homage to the artist. In recent years, however, a grant is being considered in ever-increasing measure as a means to enable gifted artists to engage in creative work. Viewed from this standpoint, it is not sensible to distribute exactly equal grants to artists who are financially in very different circumstances. Support should be channeled specially to those artist who have less possibility of earning enough to get along by means of their artistic work. The grants should not go, for example, to the writer of best-sellers. On the other hand, the earning-capacity of an artist may vary greatly from one year to another. The support system should thus be as flexible as possible in its nature and should be based on evidence regarding the financial status of the artists. The purpose of the support system should be to attempt to guarantee all artists a certain minimum income. To be sure, putting this idea into effect will be anything but simple.

Regional equalization in the distribution of grants

The artist whose activity is held to be worthy of public support does not necessarily have to be at the international or even national "level". Many an artist is indispensable as a factor in developing and maintaining a regional cultural tradition or in creating a local cultural climate. In the distribution of grants the national bodies which comprise the whole country will probably not be sufficiently able to take such artists into account. They will also not be capable of ranking together the rising young talents from all the different parts of the country. These defects will be eliminated by creating alongside the national grant-system a supplementary regional grant-system.

The distribution-procedure for grants and supervision of how grants are used

The distribution of grants should occur through the functioning of an expert-body in which the best possible knowledge of all the different segments of the art-field in question is represented. In the distribution of grants the final authority clearly should be shifted from public officials to a fixed-term body composed of artists and experts in the field. The public interest, however, requires that there should be some supervision of the use of public funds. Supervision should be concerned only with whether the grant is in fact being used for the purpose for which it was granted. Supervision should not extend to the artistic content of the activity. The artist must be free to experiment with what is new. The artist also must be able to criticize things as they are and point out what is wrong with society — even at the latter's expense.

The question of pensions for artists and their social security generally

Since the support of artists is organized through tax-free grants, the problem may arise, and indeed in Finland has arisen, that artists remain outside the sphere of those social privileges which the rest of the working population enjoys. The most significant advantage of this sort is the work-pension. If the activity of the artist who enjoys the support of public grants is held to be work done for society, just like other work done for society, which it doubtless is, then it is natural that all the same advantages should derive from this work as from other work. The logical development of this idea appears to lead to grants being treated as the artist's wages from which taxes would be paid as from other income.

The combination of support of amateur art and of professional art

The border-line between the professional artist and the amateur is frequently unclear and shifting. Mere training does not guarantee the competence of the professional artist while, on the other hand, many an amateur artist develops into a professional. In the cultural policy measures an effort should clearly be made to bring professional artists and amateurs closer together. This could happen for example in the form of setting up joint work-places. Professional artists can also be paid to function as guidance councillors for the activity of ama-

teurs, and frequently professional artists are especially suitable for this function.

In Finland at present there is a move to reorganize the whole system of grants for artists. Extensive studies have been made of the economic position of artists in Finland to provide a basis for this reorganization. Our task in the near future will be to find a solution for the eight points presented above and probably also for many other problems. For this reason, we are also especially interested in the solution of problems reached elsewhere, and also in the planning now being done in other countries.



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