
RUMEN ILKOV

ATTITUDES TOWARD CULTURE IN BULGARIA

This meeting is devoted to the financing of culture. Economists generally work with figures and facts, they make analyses for investment projects. This brief and modest paper will not mention figures and, perhaps, in form, does not correspond to the nature of this meeting. This is an attempt to say something which, in my opinion, is directly related to the financing of culture. While this may sound a bit strange, it is up to you to judge.

As I have said, I will not bore you with statistical data on the state of culture in Bulgaria, where great and important results have been recorded in the course of its 30 years of socialist development. These results are particularly impressive when one bears in mind Bulgaria's cultural heritage prior to September 9, 1944, and the Socialist Revolution. Data showing the success scored in this field can also be found in our statistical yearbooks, where one can see the major investments made by Bulgaria in the sphere of culture. For a country with a small population, the problem of effectiveness and profitability in the financing of culture is complex and difficult to resolve: the need for constant contact with cultural goods, stemming from democratization and the cultural and educational level of the population, grows at a far more rapid rate than do limited financial possibilities. This is an entirely normal and natural process. What is important, however, is that our country, aware of the exceptional role played by culture, artistic culture and especially the arts in the education of a new kind of man,

a man belonging to the communist society, devotes great attention to culture and is constantly increasing allocations for culture. This accent on increasing allocations is stressed, despite the fact that, economically speaking, culture is not profitable, it does not bring in income and revenue but rather develops in accordance with the State budget and other forms of financing. Profitability, however, must not be the sole criterion for determining the financing of culture. Financing is always subject to quite pragmatic objectives: to the realization of income. The degree of development in one field depends on the income effected, and income determines further investment in this same field. This is usually a question of fields in the material sphere, the economy, which produces goods and creates the national income, and which, therefore, develops more rapidly. That is why, generally speaking, the spiritual sphere as an entity always lags behind in terms of its development. Society, however, is a complex system composed of several sub-systems, and in order for it to advance, all of its parts must develop equally and harmoniously. The unproportional development of individual sub-systems provokes undesired results affecting the system as a whole. We are witness, for example, to the outstanding achievements of the scientific and cultural revolution, which parallel with success in numerous fields, has also provoked negative results in other spheres, not only in the creation of powerful means of destruction, the emergence of the ecological problem, etc., but also in man's mind: nervous hypertension, emotional impoverishment, etc. It is the arts and culture which will be able to neutralize these negative results and reestablish the spiritual balance which is so indispensable for man.

The law of financing, the law of „business”, the production of goods, the creation of income, the realization of profit, are the elements of material production which, transferred into the field of culture, the field of spiritual relations, the field of elevated and refined relations, would lead to degradation, to the creation of artistic stereotypes, to the identification of taste with value criteria, to the emergence of a system for the production of „mass culture” which is predisposed to be consumed as a foodstuffs article. This, then, would lead to the commercialization of culture and the impoverishment of the human personality. Hence, only the financing of activities and cultural processes which are subordinated to a basic strategical aim posed by society itself, i.e. the creation of a new kind of man, of a harmonious and universally developed personality, the education of man the creator, people the creators, can lead to real

progress in this field. This is a noble and humane goal, but in our age to fulfill it is an extremely difficult and complex task. The difficulty lies not only in the fact that culture is a phenomenon with numerous ties to the socio-economic system, but also in the fact that it is directly related to a delicate and unresearched field, i. e. the human mind.

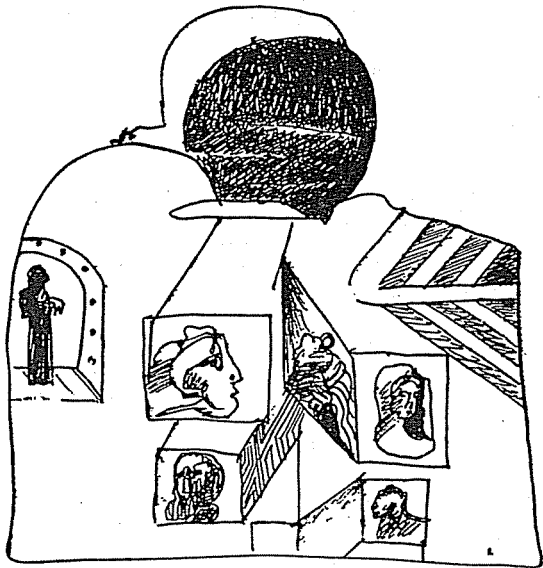
A question: Does a country which greatly invests in culture, which possesses a modern material and technical base for satisfying all scientific and technical requirements and demands, automatically raise the cultural level of the people and cultural activities? Do statistics on culture (the per centage of State budget apportionments for culture, per capita spending on culture) provide an answer to this question? I doubt it. Facts and figures destroy the individuality of any cultural and esthetic act. They are incapable of offering the possibility for an assessment of the real effect of cultural activities, the effect of culture on the human mind, on man's intellectual, cultural and esthetic development as a being who thinks and studies.

The basic problem lies in finding ways and means for evaluating the real influence of various cultural activities on the human mind, on man's outlooks on society, on his moral and esthetic orientation, and on his spiritual development as a creative being. This is an extremely arduous task, but, in my opinion, it is here that one should begin, in the sphere of the reception of cultural and esthetic phenomena, the discovery of mechanisms, the psychology of reception, for this will lead to discovery of the ways and means of influence on this mechanism.

People must be taught not to enter into contact with culture and esthetics in the capacity of foodstuff consumers (which is why the word „consumers” of esthetic values is shocking), for then the reception process becomes a feast which leaves deep and lasting traces in the mind and determines man's behaviour, serving as a compass in one's orientation towards values. It is only true and great Art which can do this. In accordance with these ideas one can further discuss the responsibility and social commitment of the creators of artistic works.

This may sound utopian, but this is the ultimate aim, the ideal towards which one should strive, regardless of the fact that this is a highly arduous, complex process whose fulfillment is still far off.

The first thing to be done is to create a programme of esthetic education, which would last throughout the life-time of the individual, and which would begin from earliest childhood. This is the only way to form men for whom contact with cultural and esthetic values becomes a necessity, like the air which he breathes.



OLJA IVANJICKI
