The arts council phenomenon

A conference report

This short publication is inspired by the first-ever Conference of Commonwealth Arts Councils, sponsored by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation at the University of Kent, Canterbury, England, 6th-9th April 1979. It has been written by Dr Jean Battersby, Chief Executive of the Australia Council, to a commission from the Foundation using a transcript and papers from the Conference. Purposely the Foundation has adopted a 'no quotes' policy, avoiding the reproduction of lengthy extracts from individual contributions. Instead, it asked Dr Jean Battersby to identify and present the principal ideas, issues and problems which arose during the three days of meetings. The Foundation sought an easily accessible work which could be an introduction to further Commonwealth discussion in this field, knowing that a second conference was planned for April 1981 in Canada. The final form of the work was discussed in Sydney in August 1980 between Dr Jean Battersby and Peter Brinson, director of the Foundation's UK and Commonwealth Branch. It was then prepared for publication by Elizabeth Sweeting, MBE, and issued as a Foundation document under the guidance of Millicent Bowerman, the UK Branch's literary editor, assisted by Claire Seignior. The Foundation is much indebted to Dr Battersby, Miss Sweeting, the Conference delegates and its own literary staff for the production of this work which it hopes will be a useful, independent contribution to Commonwealth cultural relations.

Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbon
United Kingdom and Commonwealth Branch
98 Portland Place London W1N 4ET

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INTRODUCTION

I ORIGINS OF THE CONFERENCE

The earliest discussions of what became the first conference of Commonwealth Arts Councils took place at the University of New England, Armidale, Australia, in January 1976. Peter Brinson, well known internationally as a lecturer and writer on dance, had been asked to conduct a seminar for dance teachers, drawing on film and slide resources from all over the world. Some of the teachers at the seminar spoke about their feelings of isolation in Australia from fellow artists and teachers in other countries and from the mainstream of international developments in their art form. Peter Brinson talked with Dr Jean Battersby of the Australia Council (whose guest he was) about what might be done to overcome this problem of distance, both in terms of bringing world talent and expertise to Australia and of helping Australian artists to gain exposure to international developments in their fields. Discussions were extended to arts administrators in other countries involved with the many and complex matters affecting the growth and social impact of the arts through government and private patronage, and the many issues affecting artists and those working generally in the arts. Out of these talks in Dr Jean Battersby's office was born the idea of a conference. Subsequent contacts proved the existence of similar concern in arts councils and government agencies in many countries - Britain, the United States, Canada, on the one hand, and other countries, including Australia and New Zealand, which have a particular problem being so far distant from the main world centres of arts activity and having a relatively small pool of talent.

Peter Brinson and Dr Jean Battersby met again in Australia in August 1977 and began to identify focal points of particular relevance to plans for an international conference. One was some form of international think-tank, possibly in the shape of a periodic forum of selected experts to discuss policy issues like those mentioned above, which have surprisingly wide international currency in arts administration; the other, related, was to build up for wide distribution, a body of expert knowledge and opinion, including a data base for information about key aspects of arts development.

A coincidental but important factor in the preparation for the Conference had been a recent move to establish a Commonwealth-wide arts organisation. There have been over the years a great number of international arts ventures and projects, some relating to specific arts interests (music camps, drama seasons, etc); others with a regional base such as the Asian Arts Festival, the Festac in Nigeria, the festival circuits of Europe and America and the South Pacific Festival of Arts. But there have been as yet few steps to establish permanent international machinery to promote the arts, except through the broad cultural initiatives of UNESCO.

In 1978 the Commonwealth Games were held in Edmonton, Alberta. The Sri Lankan Government notified the organisers that it was unable to send a sporting delegation and asked whether it might instead send its national dance company. There was at the same time a plan developing for a small arts festival, primarily Canadian in content, to coincide with the Games. As a result of formal and informal requests to Commonwealth countries, artists from many nations descended on Alberta and were organised by a small local administration into the ad hoc but popular Festival '78. The artists were integrated into the opening and closing ceremonies of the Games and performed during the period of the Games in both formal and informal settings, providing a lively context for the more formal and traditional activity taking place in the sports arenas.

At the end of the Games the Minister of the Interior for the Province of Alberta gave a grant to the people involved in the Edmonton festival to explore the possibility of establishing a formal arts connection throughout the Commonwealth similar to those already existing in broadcasting, education, sport and other aspects of cultural life. Two committees were set up, one consisting of people who had participated in the Edmonton festival and made it work, and a second of people, mainly London-based, who had had some active involvement in Commonwealth machinery. During 1979 James Porter, director of the Commonwealth Institute in London and Chairman of the two committees, and Robert Dubberley, organiser of the Edmonton festival and Managing Secretary of the committees, toured the

Commonwealth making contact with individuals and organisations influential in the arts. The idea grew of an organisation which would co-ordinate arts interests in the Commonwealth, provide a flow of information on the arts in Commonwealth countries and plan and execute arts activities to coincide with important Commonwealth events such as the Commonwealth Games, heads of government meetings or regional Commonwealth activities. Whether this should be a non-government organisation loosely under the umbrella of the Commonwealth, or a formal part of the Commonwealth machinery, was still at that time very much in debate, as was the question of its structure. The main problem was how to develop an organisation capable of fast responses and effective action without subjecting it to the laborious and protracted processes of consultation which might be thought necessary in a Commonwealth-wide instrumentality. And of course the big question was finance.

The success of the inclusion of the arts in the Commonwealth Games in Edmonton and, in the Southern hemisphere, the acknowledged benefit to the participants of the South Pacific Festival of Arts, were practical pointers to the need for continuing international networks for the promotion and preservation of cultural traditions. The South Pacific Festival of Arts had begun in 1972 under the aegis of the South Pacific Commission. It grew out of a profound concern among leaders of the small island countries in Oceania that their cultures were threatened by economic pressures, tourism, ad-mass communications, the generation gap, the drift to the cities, depopulation and other trends over which such small, remote countries could have virtually no control. The leaders of cultural thought feared that many trends of present-day life would extinguish the flame of their national identities, and wanted some occasion to proclaim the force and distinctiveness of their cultural traditions. They came together for this purpose in 1972 in Fiji in a festival of South Pacific arts. The movement has since grown, with countries in the region joining forces in a valiant attempt to preserve and revive cultural traditions. In preparation for the third festival in Port Moresby in July 1980 more than twenty-five Oceanic countries were planning to participate. The stimulus

to artists and the confidence restored to cultural administrators exemplify the importance of solidarity of purpose and of the status of the arts alongside political and economic concerns in the countries thus involved.

The Commonwealth orientation of the Conference membership came about partly because the initiative for the Conference happened to have come from people in Commonwealth countries or involved in Commonwealth orientated organisations. In particular, the final impulse came from the United Kingdom and Commonwealth Branch of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, which, assisted by the Arts Council of Great Britain, was our host; partly, too, because the arts council is an administrative arrangement for government arts support which originated in Britain and has been adopted in various forms in Commonwealth countries. Since the Americans had opted for the same system by and large, and since their pioneer work in this field has been of such value, it was decided to involve them in the Conference. The moves being pursued by James Porter and Robert Dubberley to set up a Commonwealth arts organisation were a further factor. Without any sense of exclusivity, the Commonwealth provided a convenient and kindly launching pad for the examination of shared interests. These, then, were the factors which helped bring about the Gulbenkian Conference.

II THE AIMS OF THE CONFERENCE

It was not a conference designed to resolve specific problems. It was intended to allow a group of experienced arts administrators, most though not all of whom had an arts council background, to explore common interests with a view to seeing what steps might be taken to help them in their work and to assist the cause of the arts in their respective countries. Insofar as the Conference had a defined goal, it was to canvass the opinions of those present about how matters of moment to their work might benefit from continuing study and what they felt about the idea of an international centre of arts studies and information. In the membership, Asia, Oceania and Africa were clearly under-represented but contact with arts administrations in those regions had not been easy to establish; the balance of membership was certainly in London's favour. But such things were not regarded as being really important the first time round. To get such a group together was in itself quite an achievement; imbalances could be set right next time as contacts improved.

It is to be hoped that the proceedings of the first such Conference might be an encouragement to Commonwealth nations not represented to contribute their aspirations and experience by their presence at further gatherings. The inception of a fully representative international cultural network could be the beginning of a new era for Commonwealth relations.

III RANGE OF TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

The wide range of ideas exchanged in early discussions suggested that emphasis might be laid on the principles and practice of government support for the arts. Governments were beginning to give greatly increased financial support to the arts, directing money to arts projects, individuals and institutions which had previously looked to the generosity of foundations. The intervention of government patronage suggested that some foundations might consider a modification of their role, with perhaps more emphasis being placed on strategic support by financing studies and information services which could help the arts promote their cause to government and to the public. The Gulbenkian Foundation seemed already to be moving in this general direction and had been commissioning special studies, often in tandem with other foundations or official bodies. The theory and practice of government administration of the arts, and in particular the phenomenon of the arts council (which has been the chosen instrument of government assistance to the arts in Britain, the United States and many Commonwealth countries) would be of interest to many countries where this practice had not been adopted or was currently under consideration.

With the passage of time, certain difficulties have begun to emerge for arts councils everywhere. Some are internal - questions of structure, operation, membership, policy-making, evaluation, accountability, forward planning and, perhaps above all, the difficulty of remaining flexible, highly motivated and energetic. Others are external - the growing tendency of politicians to intervene in the decisions and operations of arts councils, pressure from bureaucracies for conformity with traditional practice, pressures arising from the rapid growth in the arts, interaction with the commercial end of the arts spectrum, the capriciousness of media interest, the threat of financial amputation in hard economic times.

For these and other reasons, arts councils are finding some difficulty in holding ground in the competition for public funds. Enthusiasm, subjective judgement and idealism no longer suffice. What is increasingly needed is something

which has to date been impossible to achieve, given the recent origins of government involvement in arts support, namely, information and argument to consolidate that support into accepted and regular government commitment, to provide a sound basis for policy decisions and long-range planning and to offer reliable incentives for private sector support. Facts are required about the size of the arts 'industry' and its impact on the economy, about trends in public consumption of arts products and services, about employment and industrial issues and the application of arts resources in areas such as education, social welfare, the entertainment industry, film, television and publishing, about the economic bases of different art forms and about other factual and quantifiable aspects of arts development and community response.

On the policy side there is a need for constant re-examination of objectives, options and priorities; there are issues affecting the growth and social impact of the arts such as industrial and union matters and interaction with other government policies on education, migration, minority groups, ethnic affairs, health, old age, welfare. The rights of artists require safeguarding through legislation on copyright, droit de suite, droit moral and taxation. The relationship of government and private sector patronage needs constant review as does the rapid expansion of international cultural connections with attendant financial, contractual, industrial and other problems.

C O N F E R E N C E P R O C E E D I N G S

A N D I S S U E S R A I S E D

Conference of Commonwealth Arts Councils
University of Kent, Canterbury, England
6th to 9th April 1979

1 CONFERENCE DELEGATES AND GUESTS

Dr Jean Battersby
Chief Executive Officer
Australia Council
Australia

Dr Willard L Boyd
National Endowment for the Arts
USA

Peter Brinson
Director
UK and Commonwealth Branch
Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation
UK

Joy Cohnstaedt
Director
Saskatchewan Arts Board
Canada

Tom Craig
Assistant Director
Papua-New Guinea Cultural Council
Papua-New Guinea

John Drummond
Festival Director
Edinburgh International Festival
UK

Robert E Dubberley
Managing Secretary
Commonwealth Arts Committee
Canada

Hugh Davidson
Counsellor for Cultural Affairs
Canadian High Commission
UK

Sir Basil Engholm
Chairman
British Film Institute
UK

Anthony Field
Finance Director
Arts Council of Great Britain
UK

Alan Hodgart
Director
DeLoitte, Haskins & Sells
Australia

Dr Richard Hoggart
Warden
University of London Goldsmiths' College
UK

Naseem Khan
formerly, Minorities' Arts Advisory Service
UK

Ian Lancaster
Assistant Director, Arts
Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation
UK

Charles A Lussier
Director
Canada Council
Canada

Irene Macdonald
Education Liaison Officer
Arts Council of Great Britain
UK

Colm O'Briain
Director
The Arts Council
Ireland

Charles E Phillips
Executive Secretary
Arts Council of Ghana
Ghana

James Porter
Director
Commonwealth Institute
UK

Sir Shridath Ramphal
Secretary-General
Commonwealth Secretariat
UK

Rt Hon Kenneth Robinson
Chairman
Arts Council of Great Britain
UK

Roy Shaw
Secretary-General
Arts Council of Great Britain
UK

Angus Stirling
Deputy Secretary-General
Arts Council of Great Britain
UK

Michael Straight
formerly, Deputy Chairman
National Endowment for the Arts
USA

Aneurin Thomas
Director
Welsh Arts Council
UK

Michael Volkerling
Director
Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council
New Zealand

Invited but unable to attend

Louis Applebaum
Executive Director
Ontario Arts Council
Canada

Neville Dawes
Executive Director
Institute of Jamaica
Jamaica

Professor Rex Nettleford
Trade Union Education Institute
Jamaica

Elizabeth Sweeting
Adviser to the Australia Council
Australia

2 CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

Conference Chairman: Peter Brinson, Director, UK and Commonwealth Branch
Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbon

Friday, 6th April

14.15 Welcome by Peter Brinson
on behalf of the Gulbenkian Foundation followed by
Opening Addresses by Sir Shridath Ramphal,
Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Secretariat,
and by the Rt Hon Kenneth Robinson,
Chairman of the Arts Council of Great Britain

First Session: The Arts in a Democratic Society

Speaker: Roy Shaw, Secretary-General,
Arts Council of Great Britain

Supported by papers and other material supplied by members of Conference

Discussion

16.15 Second Session: Exchanging Experience

Speaker: Peter Brinson

Saturday, 7th April Evaluation and Standards

10.00 Third Session: Government and the Arts

Speaker: Michael Straight, formerly Deputy Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts, USA

14.30 Fourth Session: Excellence and Access - the British Experience

Speaker: Dr Richard Hoggart, Warden, University of London Goldsmiths' College

16.15 Commonwealth Arts - Discussion Panel

A panel composed in the light of issues raised at the Conference

21.00 "I Can Still Hear the Drums" - a film about Commonwealth Cultural Participation at the XI Commonwealth Games, Edmonton, Canada

Sunday, 8th April Commonwealth Collaboration

10.00 Fifth Session: The Arts and Education

Speaker: Willard L Boyd, National Endowment for the Arts, USA

14.30 Sixth Session: The Concept of a Commonwealth Forum

Speaker: Dr Jean Battersby, Chief Executive Officer, Australia Council

3 ARTS COUNCILS: THE ORIGINAL CONCEPT

1 The nature of the arts council

The arts council is an extraordinary administrative phenomenon. Looked at from one direction, it is a high-minded attempt to create what may be the ultimate in democratic institutions. Democratic principles have shaped its structure, its membership arrangements, the processes by which it makes decisions and policies, the nature of its links to government and its relations with the arts constituency, the public and the media. From a less charitable viewpoint, it is clumsy, cumbersome, expensive and slow. It spawns its own bureaucratic procedures and even follies. It is not generally beloved of government or of artists. It is the delight of the media, but usually for the wrong reasons. Why then has it been held by many experts in the field as a model means of providing public support to the arts?

The twentieth century has tended to transfer the capacity for arts patronage away from wealthy individuals and institutions into the hands of central government. The people who pressed government to recognise a responsibility to assist the arts were well aware that government-supported arts are singularly vulnerable to official pressures. Therefore they sought to minimise the risk that the arts might be manipulated by those in power and become a vehicle for propaganda or a victim of official standards. Observing manifold examples of regimes where the arts where put to the purposes of religion, politics or moral values, the early advocates of government aid to the arts in Western democracies proposed clear limits to government involvement and a barrier between the government patron and the artist.

Thus, the mechanism of the arts council was devised in London with the intention of shaking loose the monopoly of official patronage, of allowing experts rather than officials and politicians to decide how support should be given, of protecting the interests of artists and giving them a public advocate. The underlying philosophy of the arts council was the 'arm's length' principle. The institution was based on a complex pattern of interrelated roles involving government, council, chairman, members and administrators, and the

success of the institution largely depends on these roles being understood and observed.

2 Other methods of government support

Governments have set about support for the arts in various ways. In the United States, government support was, and remains, largely indirect, stimulated by taxation concessions and incentives. In France, there grew a powerful, central Ministry of Culture. Britain, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and other Commonwealth countries adopted the arts council as the mechanism for government support, as did subsequently the United States when, in the 1960s, both federal and state governments began providing direct help to the arts. The reason for this choice was widely rehearsed at the Conference along with the accepted rationale of arts councils - the need for artists to be protected from political directives or pressures; the fear that ministry officials with no particular background in the arts but with the power of patronage might aspire to become poor men's Lorenzos; the value to all parties of a buffer zone; the need for judgements about the arts to be made by professionals in the field; the virtue of a strong independent body capable of resisting official pressure while acting as a powerful advocate for the arts to the government and to the community. Whatever the weaknesses of arts councils, and they were freely canvassed, the consensus seemed to be that no one had so far come up with a better formula for providing government assistance to the arts in a democratic society.

3 The nature and extent of government involvement

From the beginning, the relationship between government and arts council has been an unusually sensitive one. The government role has traditionally been stated in broad terms as a set of important social objectives. These normally relate to excellence in the arts, community access to the arts, support for creative talent and the development of some concept of national identity or image through the arts. The emphasis has varied from country to country, the last point tending to be less strongly emphasised in long-established democracies and most marked in those newly independent. In the main, governments, at least in the early days, did not go much further than that. They stated the 'whither' rather than the 'how' and were persuaded that it was advisable to leave decisions about 'how' to bodies expert in the arts. Most of these bodies were given considerable independence - the Arts Council of Great Britain through a Royal Charter and most others by Acts of Parliament. A few, and this was usually the case in state or provincial government affairs, were entrusted only with an advisory role to government. The role of the arts council was generally seen as being to devise support strategies consistent with these government policies and to implement them through budget management, the provision of services and advocacy. Its role was normally protected by a charter written into its Act of Parliament. Arts councils were, in general, given a block appropriation from government and the power to decide how this should be spent. The assumption being that requirements would change from one period to another and between the different art forms, and that expertise was essential to wise decisions about the distribution of funds although no view, however expert, should prevail for too long.

4 Role as entrepreneur and advocate of the arts

An effective arts council is not simply a 'handout' organisation. Its role is open-ended, entrepreneurial and creative; its job is to look at the possibilities for helping the arts to grow and make their mark in society and then to find ways to making this happen. The council must be confident of its purpose, active in pursuit of it and should ideally maintain a high profile. To generate public enthusiasm and support it must communicate well and be prepared

tirelessly to proclaim the cause of the arts. It is a most important lobby. This does not necessarily mean harassing the government; indeed the lobbying may be directed as much to the community as to the government. But it does mean keeping the government up to the mark with argument and information and being capable of mobilising money, services and resources.

5 Structure

The traditional structure comprises a council with members representing the arts, the community, related fields of interest and, in some cases, the government connection; subsidiary panels of boards with expertise more directly focused on music, theatre, literature, film, crafts or the visual arts; plus committees and sub-committees to deal with particular aspects of the work.

6 The chairman's role in relation to the minister

The relationship between council and government is embodied in the roles of chairman and minister. Kenneth Robinson speaking for the Arts Council of Great Britain said this is, from his experience and observation, a particularly difficult relationship to establish successfully for both parties. The balance has to be right. In effect this means that the chairman of the arts council has to be a very strong person. He has to hold to its high purpose a lively organisation comprised of conflicting elements; he has to represent, as far as the public is concerned, the institution and all it stands for; he has to represent the council formally to government, proposing the cause of the arts with assurance and vigour; he has to speak for the council and for the arts and even periodically for the government, to the community and in the media. To do all this he must have a view of his own separateness from the political arm of government while at the same time perceiving and even helping to shape the political role which the minister must play in pursuit of the same objectives. Governments in most countries have recognised the need for strength and for visible independence in the chairman and have generally appointed prominent public figures of known commitment to the arts. Where such action is reinforced by a regard for formalities, the arrangement is capable of working well.

The Americans have taken a different approach. The President appoints an executive chairman who holds consider-

ably more power than the part-time chairman of the British and of most Commonwealth councils. For the term of his appointment he is the ultimate authority and heads both council and administration. He is advised by his council but not bound by its advice and is personally responsible for each grant given. The functions of minister and chairman therefore need careful distinction. The minister represents the commitment and objectives of government in supporting the arts, not only to his colleagues but to the council, the public, the arts constituency and the media. It is a political role which, if imaginatively carried out, is by no means unrewarding either personally or in electoral terms, as recent American studies have shown. But it only works well where the minister ensures by careful appointment that his council is effective, where he too subscribes to the formal differentiation of roles which the arts council system presupposes, and where he refrains from intervention in the council's affairs or from moving too close personally to the arts. The minister must be successful in his prime task of getting money for the arts, but should in other respects exemplify the government's distancing from direct involvement, according to the 'arm's length principle'.

7 Effects of change of government

In Britain, the chairman sees his term out regardless of a change of government and this is the arrangement in most Commonwealth countries. The assumption is that a different government may, at the end of that term, make an appointment more to its liking. Staff members, both in Britain and in most Commonwealth arts councils, are not affected at all by a change of government. In the United States the system is different both for the chairmen of arts councils and, in many cases, for senior officials. Even where the legislation provides for a chairman to continue after a change in the Administration, people are more visibly identified with a particular President or Governor and are likely to leave, either voluntarily or otherwise, in such circumstances. It must, however, be pointed out that there are aspects of the council/government relationship where theory may need to bow to common sense. A council is not necessarily suborned because the minister or president knows and likes the chairman. The arts council may suffer

noticeably without the active commitment of the minister or president. It may well be that this commitment is less readily made if he feels that the council as a body is not sympathetic to him. Even so, diplomacy and skilful dealing with the government, should differences of opinion occur, may avoid conflict.

8 Some benefits of involvement

In some particular cases where arts policy is an integral part of government policy, direct involvement is inevitable and beneficial. This was the case in Papua New Guinea for a period after independence, and in South Australia under a particularly sympathetic premier - where the arts had made great strides as a result of the direct personal interest and support of ministers. The Papua New Guinea Government has been very closely involved in artistic developments in the post-independence phase. It has used the arts for political objectives, namely to help the general process of cementing disparate racial and social elements into a nation. National institutions have been swiftly created - a cultural council, a museum, a performing arts company, an institute to study cultural traditions and trends, an arts school and many support programmes designed to enable creative individuals to shape the image of a contemporary nation from a diversity of languages and cultural forms. It has been a deliberate policy by the government, which has remained closely involved in the whole developmental programme. Similarly, if political history is one factor qualifying arts council independence, demography is another. In a very small country - New Zealand, for instance - it is inevitable that the minister and those responsible for the arts council should know each other personally. In such a case, regular contact may be helpful in creating a unified approach to cultural affairs.

9 Regional representation on arts councils

The central arts council's aim of keeping in closer touch with a wider geographical and demographic area has brought some pressure to incorporate regional representation on the central body. Those who support this view, point out that arts councils operate in a political context and if they do not take into account the political reality of special interest groups, then either the reputation and funding of the council is likely to suffer or else mandatory

membership arrangements, such as representation, will be imposed by politicians. It is also said that by including regional members arts councils are helping to develop knowledge and experience in arts administration throughout the community. Those who take the opposite view stress that since arts councils have a primary preoccupation with quality and since the business of making decisions in arts administration is so complex and difficult, it is essential to search for the best qualified people on the assumption that the national interest is thereby best served, even if geographic and regional niceties are not finely observed. A middle course allowing for political and social developments as they arise could operate flexibly to produce changing groups of members who will, over a period of time, mirror the interests of the principal blocs in the arts and in society.

10 Individuals or representatives

Generally there is a wish to avoid ex-officio or formal representation of outside interests or bodies in the membership of arts councils. Stress on enlisting representation of the finest quality swings against including members who may have special interests to protect. It is also claimed, with perhaps less democratic feeling than possible truth, that regional representatives too might have a bias or would not measure up in quality to freely chosen membership. The stress on the quality of membership appears in general to outweigh the principle of representation, whether of special interest or geography. This conclusion is largely determined by the view taken of the role of the members.

11 The role of council members

The role of members is of critical importance. They are the antennae of the community and of the arts constituency. The real purpose of including a large component of part-time members, apart from the democratic wish to prevent the power of public patronage being too narrowly concentrated, is to create an organisation which can reach out into the community and be sensitive to community needs and conditions as well as to movements in the arts. The part-time nature of the appointments is intended to emphasise the importance of this outreach and to give it extended range. The limited term normally applied to membership is intended to enable new skills to be brought in as circumstances require and, in a

field where so many judgements are subjective, to allow both for consensus and for variety. The part-time membership is considered to be one of the main sources of arts council vitality, with the members acting in the role of field intelligence and feeding external ideas, experience and assessments into the policy and decision-making processes of the organisation.

12 Methods of membership selection

Generally, appointments are made by the government of the day, but there is a view, widespread among advocates of participatory democracy, that members should be chosen by some other means - either nominated by special groups within the arts constituency or elected by people most concerned with the work of the arts council, appointed as representatives of sectional interests which are covered by arts council endeavours, or, as noted above, by regional status. Yet there is really no satisfactory means of electing members from the public at large.

The practice of calling for nominations for board membership by public advertisement, which happens in some countries, is probably of doubtful value. Nomination was written into the Australia Council legislation with a view to widening the membership base, and was adopted a little later in Britain for appointments to panels. Nominations have to be vetted and short-listed and this is normally done by staff or part-time members. Unless there is to be a lengthy and complex checking process, the chances are that the final list is likely to be not so very different from that which would have emerged had there not been nominations, and that these will, by and large, be people with whose views the existing members and staff do not find themselves in total disharmony. This generalisation may be more likely to be true for countries with small populations than for Britain or the United States. But the democratic virtue of the process may well have been over-emphasised.

Conversely, the pressure for representation of sectional interests on arts councils has turned out sometimes to be thoroughly undemocratic. In the USA, for instance, women's groups, unions, ethnic minorities and even the state arts councils have been exercising pressure on the National Endowment to have a voice in policy-making and to have

representation on panels. While it is easy anough to utilize representative viewpoints in certain programmes such as community ones, there are instances where the quality of decisions on matters of a technical or professional kind has been compromised by the inclusion of irrelevant sectional interests.

13 Decisions by voting or consensus

The reaching of decisions by bodies made up of members with disparate backgrounds and views is another debatable aspect of arts council procedure. One view holds that voting gives an objective decision. The argument for a consensus stresses eliciting frank opinion from as many members as possible by the chairman. There is a certain protection from the unwelcome and undemocratic procedure of 'stacking' the meeting with the final vote in mind. It may be that the consensus encourages the expression of diverse opinions rather than a power strategy. It certainly places the capacity for sensing the feeling of a meeting high up among the good chairman's qualities, as was stressed by Kenneth Robinson.

14 Sources of funding - public and private

Most arts councils receive funding for the major areas of operation by means of an annual appropriation from parliament. The amount has to be negotiated annually and has to take its place among the competing areas of government expenditure. The other main source is the private sector. The ratio of support from these two sources is variable from country to country. Factors which affect are - the historical background of ownership and operation of arts institutions, the degree of private wealth and philanthropy as compared with the commitment of government to public support of the arts, demographic factors and the nature of indigenous arts tradition and activity as a national phenomenon. In countries where the main source of sustaining subsidy is government, the private sector is becoming increasingly important in times of economic stress. The relationship is in process of being worked out so that maximum advantages from the public and private sectors may accrue to arts activity.

15 Examples of national practices

In the United States, arts institutions (galleries, museums, orchestras, drama, dance and opera companies), which are frequently state-owned amenities in other countries, are, in the main, privately owned and operated, depending for survival on consumer contributions and philanthropy. In a large, affluent, diverse community, such a system has proved capable of working well although it should be noted that this is largely thanks to the willingness of government to forego revenue by permitting tax exemptions for personal, corporate and foundation support for the arts. This indirect contribution probably explains why the federal and state governments in America were so late in moving into direct support for the arts and why, when they did so, the appropriation was, in terms of national and state budgets, miniscule.

In the majority of countries government dominates the economy and government funds have been necessary to ensure the survival of the arts at any reasonable level. The distance between these two stances has narrowed over the last decade. Government contribution in the United States is seen increasingly as being essential to the survival of

the arts, while the private sector in other countries is being more vigorously tapped to supplement the government provision. But the different origins of government support go some way to explaining fundamental divergences in the budget philosophies of certain arts councils.

16 Effects of funding sources on policy - American practice

The budget policy of the National Endowment in the United States favoured particular projects, matching grants and other limited-life, percentage or incentive forms of aid, and declined to see government money as being justifiably spent to cover the basic survival costs of arts institutions or continuing projects. A far greater allocation would in any case have been necessary had this latter approach been adopted. It has forced the arts to be on their toes in presenting themselves to the community, with resultant benefits in vitality, variety, quality, status and public response. It has kept alive an old and beneficial aspect of American life, namely, the tradition of individual and corporate arts philanthropy, thereby stimulating community involvement in arts activities and institutions and identifying for the arts a pride of place in community life.

There are some disadvantages. Arts administrators have had to divert a lot of time and energy away from artistic purposes to fund-raising for their organisations. The National Endowment is regarded as compounding their difficulties by forcing them into artificial and time-consuming special project applications when their basic survival is at risk. Inflation is likely to close off some corporate and private sponsorship just at the time when it is most needed. The growing strength of the claims of artists' unions presupposes a more stable base to the industry than annual foraging for funds is capable of providing. There are certain artists and art forms which always find it impossible to pay their way or to attract private patrons, and for these public support through government is indispensable. A primarily voluntary support system such as obtains in the United States means that any prospect of central planning of arts resources may be minimized, along with the capacity to achieve the wider policy objectives, such as equitable access to arts opportunities or nationally planned improvements in the quality of life.

17 Effects of government funding

In countries where government subvention virtually guarantees the survival of the arts, the allocation of funds to cover the operating costs of organisations, to provide secure income for creative individuals and to meet the expenses of training and other essential aspects of development, is a basic budgetary premise which pre-empts a large part of each arts council appropriation. It has undoubtedly certain advantages. It has given the arts a status in the social scheme of things, it allows professional artists to concentrate on their proper work, it can take into account particular matters of a social, demographic or geographic kind.

The adverse impact of a virtual government monopoly is threefold. First, it may affect originality and vitality of budget-thinking in arts councils themselves. The inevitable trend has been towards a certain comfortable conservatism in planning such that, even where people have wished to be more innovative, external and internal pressures have tended to be against them. Budgets early became locked into a pattern of fixed priorities which, particularly in times of government constraint or inflation, or both, have limited the capacity of arts councils to use finance creatively to stimulate development, and have forced them increasingly towards a status quo/survival position. Second, there is the difficulty of stimulating supplementary support from private sources which see themselves already taxed to facilitate the government contribution and are reluctant or unable to assist further. Third, it relates to the arts themselves - whether an establishment of supported people and institutions can generate a desirable dynamic in the contemporary arts or whether cushioned survival may cause complacency or edge out new or potential talent.

18 Long-term planning and government funding

The government budget cycle creates great difficulties for arts council planning. The estimates process, involving discussions with clients, usually begins a year or so in advance of the government budget. The final presentation to government proposes a complex integration of support for institutions and for a wide range of individual artists and art programmes. Hardly any arts councils have a firm commitment on forward funding; relatively few have any guarantee of

indexation against inflation - an interesting indication of how arts expenditure is seen at government level. Even minimum levels of forward planning are therefore difficult. Most councils must wait until almost the beginning of the financial year (some even after it, according to forlorn voices at the Conference) to learn their total appropriation, after which the internal business of allocation must be done, a particularly difficult process in adverse budgetary periods. All of this is damaging both to the recipient and to the capacity of the arts council to shape effective policies. In countries where government subsidy is essential to cover the minimum costs of the main arts institutions, both institutions and arts councils tend to lead an unsatisfactory hand-to-mouth existence. Given the demand for world-class artists, boards and managements are frequently obliged to enter into commitments and contracts, often for several years in advance, which they may have no certainty of honouring. Tougher company legislation in many countries is already bringing home to them the vulnerability of their position. However, arts councils, while sympathetic to the problem, are reluctant to make forward commitments to the bigger institutions since this can only be done by pre-empting a part of their own unknown total for the coming year. The pattern of many arts council budgets reveals in any case a percentage drift over the years in favour of the big institutions at the expense of support for creative individuals, projects, experimental and community work. Councils are accordingly under heavy pressure, both internal and external, not to favour the institutionalised art forms at the expense of others which simply happen to have a different structural and economic base. The need for long-term planning by councils has already been noted. It is emphasised that year-to-year budgeting makes it virtually impossible. Arts councils are constantly presenting arguments to governments for the longer term commitment to alleviate the problems and to give arts organisations some measure of stability, at least for the foreseeable future.

Faith has been pinned to the 'rolling triennium' but it seems not to be the ideal answer in prevailing economic conditions. Indeed the British experience in the early seventies

has demonstrated the weakness of triennial budgeting, a sound principle in a situation of moderate growth, low inflation and high political priority, but a near impossibility in conditions like those which rapidly put paid to the British experiment when, in a single year, inflation suddenly ran into the mid-twenties.

19 Budgetary preparation and advocacy

Arts councils must be meticulous in their budgetary procedures, and systematic and professional in their presentation of estimates. Their advocacy must be continuous at the political level, which is where the important decisions about the total level of arts support, the rate of growth, indexation, or forward financial commitments will finally be made.

20 Internal budgetary allocation

A particular problem connected with the internal allocation of funds by arts councils is the inescapable competitiveness of members and officers on behalf of different art forms. Each form must necessarily have changing levels of need and economic base within themselves, not only in comparison with each other. Many judgements have therefore to be taken into account together with social and political judgements about desirable levels of consumer contribution and other relevant factors. If the analyses and evaluations are well based (something which has only recently become possible), the result should be a much greater flexibility in allocations between the different art forms and, within them, to different programmes. However, arts council budgets, upon examination, tend to vary relatively little in internal structure from year to year, partly because of forces inside the organisation and partly because, in most instances, the necessary supportive data to justify significant variation is not yet readily available. Wherever radical changes have occurred in arts council budgets, they seem to have been in response either to sudden crises in arts organisations or to drastic budget reductions at government level, and less frequently to variables in need resulting from previous support policies, market changes, additional sources of patronage or other similar factors.

21 Separate line appropriation

Arts councils are part of a larger pattern of arrangements for government arts support, the rationale for which is not always clear. A good deal of arts funding pre-dated the establishment of arts councils and some of it was in due

course consolidated into arts council appropriations as they were established. In other cases it was either not appropriate, or not done, and such support has remained as separate lines in Treasury or other departmental votes. There is no suggestion that arts councils should necessarily hold monopoly control of funding for the arts. However, in most countries the situation has arisen or continued without real consideration of the bases of funding of different institutions. It is not always taken into account that finance provided in one area of an art form may materially affect policies devised by arts councils for supporting other aspects of the same art form. There is a need to take an overall view of all government arts initiatives (including the extent to which creative artists are sustained by the academic vote) and if possible to provide a rationale which will prevent inequities, frictions and doubts about the basis of particular grant decisions.

22 Lobbying by individual organisations

A fairly common consequence of the lack of integrated and rationalised government policies on arts finance has been to encourage arts institutions, or factions, to believe that their separate causes may be better favoured by direct dealings with the Minister for the Arts, with Treasury or with other departments. They bypass arts councils and separate themselves from the overall distribution of arts grants. Where this political lobbying has been successful, the capacity of some arts councils to plan comprehensively has been reduced, because some funding decisions are made without reference to them or because arbitrary conditions are imposed on how their own budgets may be allocated. Such political intrusions, budgetary restrictions or alternative channels of arts funding have begun to cause in many arts councils anxiety about their continued capacity to plan and carry out long-term development of arts policy.

5 ARTS COUNCILS IN A CHANGING SOCIETY

a) External pressures

23 Symptoms of change

It is now becoming apparent that the effluxion of time has worn away the fine lines of the original model and in some cases eroded its very foundations. Weaknesses have been exposed in the complex organisational structure and strains placed on the relationship with government. Circumstances, both in the arts and in society, have changed significantly; the human factor has in some cases played havoc with organisational theory and strategic objectives. This is not necessarily to say that arts councils are in decline or on the way out, or that the concept of an independent strategic and policy-making unit is not still good. There are certainly problems, but some at least are the problems of success. Having come in at a period of crisis to stimulate the arts, many councils are now faced with a volatile situation where the arts are thriving and vocal, the community is more aware and equally vocal about its need for the arts, while government is both interested and more inclined to interfere.

24 Effects of change

In Britain, for instance, there is now much greater political interest in the arts and in the function of government patronage. Both Conservative and Labour Parties in Britain have published documents which propose more direct involvement by government in the detail of arts patronage; so has the trades union movement. The 'arm's length principle' is said to have been weakened similarly in respect of broadcasting and the universities.

Even so, an arts council as an instrument of government cannot ignore the government connection any more than it can ignore its responsibilities to the arts. Indeed, one of the most important skills of an arts council must be to exploit the full potential of the government connection for the benefit of the arts. This can only be done by keeping an eye on both interests. Although some may have been convinced that a well-disposed political gift horse should not be examined too closely, others remained strongly aware of the risks to the arts which can result from arts councils encouraging, ignoring or acquiescing in moves by the political arm of government which prevent a broad bi-partisan commitment to

the arts. Time has clearly shown that the intrusion of party politics into arts patronage is becoming an increasing problem in many countries.

25 Increased political intervention

Success and growth provide, at least in part, an explanation. When arts councils began, it was usually with a very modest appropriation, too small to attract much attention from politicians or bureaucrats. For most arts councils the percentage growth has been very high, so that they now receive amounts which, although minute in comparison with defence, welfare and education funds, are large enough to be politically visible. The arts have begun to flourish and, with them, arts politics. Some of this is played out on party lines or is manipulated in that direction - the so called high arts versus the community arts. The well established and well connected arts institutions lobby politicians most likely to respond to tradition and quality; artists with a different view argue social conscience and the destruction of cultural dinosaurs. Both groups are likely to disagree with the policies of an arts council seeking a bit uneasily to accommodate both pressures, and both are likely to lobby the government, making as much use of the media as possible.

Some ministers under pressure have held to a proper view of the limitations of government involvement or else have taken welcome shelter from pressure behind the buffer of the arts council. But instances were cited at the Conference of ministers who had yielded under this sort of pressure, some nervous of any kind of public outcry, others happy to do favours, others prepared and even eager to trust their own judgement against that of long established experts in the field. In some cases the result has been an immediate limitation of the authority of arts councils - the introduction of special pre-determined lines in their budgets or other forms of control or instruction from the minister which, in the course of time, invite other lobbies to play the same game. Such erosions of formalities and systems make it difficult for arts councils to plan effectively and to maintain professional standards of contact with the arts constituency.

26 Community pressures and political attitudes

Community pressures have added to those of the arts constituency in search of funds. Considering how small most government arts allocations have been in relation to national budgets, they have attracted attention far greater than their size would seem to warrant. The reasons are diverse - a belief that the arts are not essential to national survival and do not warrant government funds; that more urgent needs (sewerage and roads are usually the front runners) should have priority; or that people should pay for their pleasures. Philistinism and puritanism are powerful forces which politicians disregard at their peril. The sober, workaday image which wins votes is likely to suffer from too close an identification with the lively, pleasurable, diverting and, above all, controversial or scandalous arts. Politicians are nervous by nature and there have been spectacles down the years of politicians washing their hands of arts councils under public or media outcry or under outraged challenge from their peers.

27 Public service attitudes in government

It is not only the politicians, of course; from all accounts at the Conference, the same impulses are at work worldwide in the bureaucracy which tends by its nature to reject foreign bodies. Mainstream civil services are large, staid, conservative bodies with long established ways of doing and thinking. It has not been easy for arts councils to gain acceptance for the best operational conditions for their entrepreneurial, servicing, advisory and grant-giving functions, and for the administration of their intricate structure. Their claims have sometimes been met by incomprehension and sometimes treated as wilful and frivolous. They have not normally been powerful enough in this relationship to command attention and respect. The civil service has tended to focus on one function of the organisation, namely the grant-giving role, and to ignore those other functions which distinguish arts councils from most other government departments and functionaries which disburse public funds, and account for them along conventional lines readily comprehended by Treasury and other officials.

28 Public service attitudes to staffing and evaluation

One example commonly given of the reluctance of civil services to perceive the requirements of arts councils was the imposition of general civil service staffing conditions

which arts administrators considered on the whole inappropriate to their needs and damaging to their capacity to remain flexible and responsive to changing situations in the arts.

Pressure for short-term quantifiable results and disinterest in qualitative evaluation of expenditure were other factors. In the beginning, arts councils had almost nothing to argue with in the way of facts, figures, evaluations and surveys. This general weaponry of budgetary argument was not available, partly because councils were overwhelmingly engaged in practical trouble-shooting and developmental work and partly because the time scale was too short. Creative output and consumption trends require time to be evaluated. Arts council administrators in some countries began to acquire a reputation in the bureaucracy for being high-handed or irresponsible because they were inclined to keep on asserting the value of what they were doing, without, in those early days, being in a position to demonstrate it with facts and figures. The fact that this demonstrably could not be done at the time did not prevent civil service colleagues from reproaching them or from assuming that they were unwilling to do so, a point which may well explain some of the reservations which the financial and allied arms of bureaucracy continue to have about arts councils, at least in certain countries. The proper insistence of councils on aesthetic and qualitative criteria, both for expenditure and evaluation, has also created difficulties of communication and procedure and seems likely to continue to do so, at least until familiarity breeds tolerance.

29 Political appointments to arts councils

A device which some governments have used to strengthen their position vis-à-vis arts councils has been to make appointments from the civil service to their membership. This has tended to be the case in countries where government gives only qualified independence to a council or does not wholly subscribe to independence even where it legally exists. It was thought that the idea of having officials from government ministries appointed as members of councils set up to help the arts would tend to diminish the authority of the chief executive, one of whose functions would normally be to sort out relations with the bureaucracy. This view was shared by many administrators with first-hand experience of

such situations. They were able to point to instances where official members who happened to have no personal interest in the arts saw their function on council as being essentially to protect other departmental interests or to represent ministerial or civil service views in council debates. The more pessimistic saw such appointments as being potentially damaging to a council's main purposes or as taking up seats which might be more fruitfully occupied by people with special knowledge or experience in the arts. One or two instances were quoted where civil servants had accepted appointment to arts councils and had then, because of conflicting interests, failed to give good service or had appeared to use their arts council connection essentially to the benefit of their other responsibilities in government.

30 Establishment of secondary bureaucracy for the arts

A further consequence of rapid growth on the relationship between arts council and government has been the emergence of a secondary cultural bureaucracy in the ministries which service government. Even where arts councils exist, ministries for the arts or for cultural activities have been established to service ministers in their public and parliamentary roles and to handle other cultural initiatives with which arts councils do not deal. Sometimes, instead of establishing a special ministry, these functions have been added to ministries of education or community welfare or home affairs. Other ministries with special functions relating to government finance and staffing have also begun to appoint special staff units to deal with the arts, as have foreign ministries and departments dealing with ethnic minorities, social welfare and education.

b) Internal problems

31 Structure

With the passage of time, it has become apparent that the structures set up in the traditional arts council are in need of re-examination in the light of the many aspects of change - economic, social and educational, together with the experience of other models, as well as political attitudes. In addition to the political factors which affect the chairman, described above, the method of appointing members is under scrutiny in the light of time, experience and the growing importance of experimental and community arts.

32 Membership - use of experts

When the original theories were being worked out, the idea of an organisation comprised of representatives of different arts forms was thought likely to be a source of stimulus and to facilitate multi-arts developments. It was also believed that a council of experts would be more competent than career civil servants to decide how the general grant-in-aid should be allocated between the different art forms. All of this has been shown to be true of course; but it has at the same time tended to create competing factions which can (particularly in hard times) be destructive, and whose separate interests may well outweigh corporate loyalty or at least make it difficult to achieve imaginative and co-operative forward planning.

33 Term of appointment

The concept of part-time membership based on rotating appointments has also not been an unqualified success. It is true that it has brought in valuable expertise to deal with current problems and to make particular judgements in relation to different art forms. It has also tended to have an adverse effect on stability, on relations between part-time members and full-time staff, on the quality of judgements and decisions, and on the general flexibility and drive of arts councils. Most membership appointments are for three, four or five years. This means that, at any given time, between one-fifth and one-third of the organisation is relatively new and much time is taken up with briefing and going over old ground. There is little chance of a new member coming into such a complex organisation with any immediate prospect of effecting significant change. The same support programmes tend to go on, the same types of grants continue to be given, the same budgetary allocations are made to the different art forms. If anything, and contrary to the original intention, the very volatility of the organisation has proved to be a force for conservatism.

34 Long-term planning

The continuous changeover in membership may well aggravate the problem of reconciling short-term decisions with the long-term planning essential for the growth and establishment of the arts. It combines with excessive political involvement and bureaucracy to inhibit the development of a coherent policy. Such factors, compounded by the usual facts of organisation life, have helped make it

difficult for arts councils to be the dynamic source of policy which was once hoped. An arts council is a difficult kind of body in which to keep corporate memory or motivation and, unless there is an exceptionally able chairman to prod memory and to hold things on course, there are likely to be rapid swings of opinion and practice resulting from fluctuating attendances, changing minds or changing moods - even from poor memories. What is really required, here more than anywhere, is the opportunity for considered reflection, continuity and long-term planning. Finding, fostering and training talent is a lengthy process, as is the identification of community needs and devising means of satisfying them.

35 Responsibility

Arts councils have also shown themselves by experience to be an extremely difficult type of organisation in which to generate a sharp sense of responsibility. The structure devised to diffuse responsibility has been, if anything, a little too effective, in relation both to grant-giving and to policy advice. Everyone can shelter behind someone else. Chairmen and chief executives can dissociate themselves from decisions, disclaiming responsibility for choices made by expert panels, sheltering behind the principle of expert judgement. Individuals are never held accountable for decisions, partly because they may well have left the organisation before the impact of their decisions is felt, and partly because they are protected by group responsibility. Members therefore have the unusual luxury of making judgements which affect the lives of many others without any real change to their authority or without being directly answerable for the quality of their work.

36 Means of delegating responsibility

Many councils have sought to honour the principle of diffused responsibility by delegating to panels or other groups in the organisation the power to make decisions. But, however democratic the theory, the practice has frequently created systems too cumbersome for any responsible or responsive exercise of authority. Increased numbers of panels and individuals may in fact abrogate the central responsibility of the council because of difficulties in keeping track of them. The elaborate safeguards in arts councils against undue exercise of authority have not only made it difficult to pin down executive responsibility, particularly in grant-

giving, but they have tended also to enshroud the policy-making function and weaken the sense of strategic responsibility to government and to the arts which is in the long run a more important function for arts councils than particular financial decisions. It should, however, be borne in mind that the necessarily general objectives of the arts councils make it difficult to define precisely how responsibility should be exercised for the multitude of different perceptions of the quality involved in creating an atmosphere of creativity for a pluralistic society.

37 Artists as council members

The passage of time and the development of the arts have shown up some problems where legislation or convention cause a predominance of artists or arts devotees as arts council members. In the early days, when fast practical advice was needed on how to set up support schemes for music or crafts or dance or the visual arts, a preponderence of arts experts was essential to provide it. The arts have grown rapidly and are now supported by a strong infrastructure of companies, entrepreneurial bodies and co-ordinating and servicing agencies. Support schemes have been evaluated; surveys and research findings are now available. The nature of the problems which require to be dealt with is now changing. Arts councils are likely to be involved in important decisions about institutional arrangements, financial management, systems of accountability, law, contracts, copyright issues, research findings, relations between central government and regional or state authorities, joint planning with other departments of government and many other matters relating to the growth of the arts industry and its impact on society. To some extent the question of direct support programmes is now the least difficult matter with which arts councils have to deal. Many people at the Conference clearly had reason to doubt that in these new circumstances the original concept of membership could continue to prove relevant or useful. On the contrary, it was seen as being likely to produce amateurish decisions about increasingly difficult issues.

38 Grant-giving

Most councils are heavily engaged in giving grants to the different art forms and seem likely to want to continue to do so. In the early days this pre-occupation with direct

patronage was, for most arts councils, an inevitability. The Canada Council had had the Massey Commission to define the cultural needs of the community; the Arts Council of Great Britain had had some war-time trial by combat. But most other councils were established to adorn a new social vision or a new nationalism, and found that the arts were in too great a state of crisis for this to be easily done. There was little time to contemplate or theorize. There was also an absence of support systems such as servicing and co-ordinating agencies, other government departments or regional and local instrumentalities to which some of the work and the decisions might have been handed down. Arts councils moved straight into the business of direct patronage, setting up support programmes, calling for applications, holding meetings, making choices, giving out grants. This fact determined organisational arrangements, pre-empted the use of staff and time, coloured the view which the government and public took of arts councils and, perhaps more importantly, the view which they began to take of themselves. Most of the energy of arts councils became geared to the requirements of the grant-giving treadmill - the regular cycles of application, vetting, consideration at meetings, decision, follow-up work and accountability. The structure of arts councils is now largely dominated by the grant-giving process. The exponential growth of advisory groups has been reflected in staffing policies designed to service the system. Arts councils have begun to create their own bureaucracy with systems and deadlines and a degree of impersonality and rigidity. Since grant-giving is an activity which members clearly enjoy and to which they can readily relate, each new batch of members has embraced this function with enthusiasm. There has been considerable reluctance to devolve funds to the many organisations which now exist and are capable of distributing money and managing grant programmes. Devolution has not been popular with arts council members. Certain early attempts, in Britain and elsewhere, were not on the whole very successful. By far the most important consequence of this preoccupation with grant-giving has been the drain on time which might otherwise be used for policy and planning. Demands on staff time are such that the quality of policy groundwork is

less good than it might otherwise be; the diversion of the expertise of members to the grant-giving process deprives them of time which might be of more value if allocated to policy consideration.

39 The impact of professional arts administrators

The development of professional arts administrators of experience and competence, who did not exist in the early formative days, is a new factor in the operation and attitudes in arts councils. They can now move with ease into the administrative systems which have been evolved over the years. Their job satisfaction lies at one stage removed from direct participation in the arts, in helping to create the circumstances in which the arts can function well.

A problem has arisen within arts councils which relates to this situation. Unlike the early days, there are now inside the organisation staff members who probably know more than do many individual part-time members about the arts scene nationwide, the trends and even the particular professional problems which need to be tackled. In many arts councils a degree of internal friction has been noted between members and administrators. It is not easy for either party. The full-time administrators tend to be held responsible - certainly by the public and the bureaucracy - for the quality of decisions taken by other people and for their results. They appear before parliamentary enquiries and hearings to defend decisions to which they may not have been a party or with which they may not have agreed in the first place. Most of them are charged with carrying out policies and preparing advice, but many have relatively little delegated authority and are engaged in a constant process of referral back to part-time people, who may be less well informed than they are themselves.

Members are faced with the problem that the better the professional staff, the more likely it is that the status of membership will be diminished, at least in the perception of members, who rightly fear a rubber-stamp role. In this situation a degree of mutual suspicion seems to be inevitable. The part-time members are likely to fear the power, or the theoretical power, of the staff even where both the institution and the arts have been safeguarded against mis-use of such power by the terms of employment or by the withholding

of delegations. At the same time, the professional staff, particularly when under work pressure, may feel that the processes of consultation are too cumbersome or that members do not act with great responsibility, and may tend to be frustrated by the time-consuming and unproductive processes of board and panel operations. This problem seems to have been exacerbated by the orientation of arts councils to grant-giving rather than to matters of policy and arts advocacy.

6 RESPONSE TO PRESSURES AND PROBLEMS

40 The end of an era

It would appear from the discussions and papers that the general consensus of opinion at the Conference was that the passage of time and the rapidity of change affecting the arts council entity were forcing re-appraisal of its purpose, contexts(social, political, artistic and economic) and of its structure and modus operandi. The diagnosis of its ills is being made. Some councils have already begun, by practical experiment or by studies on organisational restructure, to try and treat some of these problems.

41 The New Zealand re-structuring

The Arts Council in New Zealand has replaced its earlier structure of panels and separate art forms with one based instead on the strategic functions - professionalism, practice and appreciation of the arts, accessibility and regional development, and public education, promotion and research. Michael Volkerling explained the main changes which his Council believed made it better suited to life in the 1980s than perhaps the Arts Council of Great Britain or the Australia Council. They include the abolition of panels or boards; the adoption of a programme approach to policy formulation rather than an incremental approach; the definition of programmes in terms of functions laid down in the Council's legislation, so that the terms are consistent, shared by government, the Council and the Department of Internal Affairs; the replacement of boards by consultants who advise staff on specific matters; the functioning of the consultants, very few of whom are arts practitioners but have specialist knowledge in other fields, rather in the manner of a board of directors; increased responsibility for Council staff, whose recommendations they inspect and refine if necessary. A result of these changes has been the formation of professional associations of artists with whom the Council is in touch.

42 A new liaison office in the United States

To avoid bureaucratic competition and duplication of functions, and to ensure that government cultural machinery operates effectively, action has been taken in the United States. The National Council on the Arts and the Humanities has been brought back from relative inactivity to help co-ordinate arrangements between the different government cultural organisations and a new liaison office has been

established to co-ordinate the respective contributions of the National Endowment and the Department of Education in the field of arts and education.

43 The Australian data base

A not dissimilar approach was taken in 1975 in Australia by McKinsey and Co, a firm of management consultants, who were asked by the Arts Council to look at organisational problems arising partly from the evolution of the Council from an earlier system of advisory committees dealing with different art forms, and partly from the overwhelming burden imposed in so short a time by the thousands of direct grants the Council was considering or giving each year. To resolve the latter problem, the consultants recommended substantial devolution of funds, particularly for small grants; and they suggested a new structure for the Council reflecting the main problems with which it has to deal rather than the traditional art form differentiation. The Council chose to continue broadly in its established pattern. Some time later, however, it took steps to tackle a different problem, namely the lack of adequate information with which to evaluate its work and on which to base future policy and claims to government.

Alan Hodgart, an economist who had earlier carried out a national survey on private sector support for the arts in Australia, was commissioned in 1978 to draw up a model data base for the Council. The project was to provide a statistical framework within which data about the growth and development of the arts in Australia might be collected, to compile a set of statistical data to serve as a model of the way in which descriptive analyses of the arts in Australia could be prepared for use in information services and, more particularly in policy development, and to develop measures of performance within the different art forms which would help in making decisions about the use of arts resources. The project was intended to help the Council towards more informed policy-making and more effective planning. It was hoped to provide in the model a statistical record of arts funding in Australia over the decade 1968-1978, classified by art form and funding source. The framework was to be capable of providing both a macro-arts view (ie of the resources available to the arts compared to other sectors of the economy) and a micro-arts view (ie of the resources available to the various sectors of the arts).

44 The need for self-help

There was agreement on the need for arts councils to solve their own problems because some outside sources from which it might be expected that constructive analysis would be brought to bear on arts council operations have so far not proved generally productive. There was some pessimism about the chances of finding perceptive support and comment from parliamentary budget and policy committees, from arts and community interests, from the media or even from universities. It was argued, for instance, that an agency accumulating data and judging government might well be sited in a university with a detached approach but concern about the level of power. An endeavour to have such an operation for the arts set up in the United States had so far met with no response.

45 Summary of the needs for re-evaluation

If arts councils are to operate successfully they have to be very good indeed at many different and often conflicting things. If they do not make good judgements about the arts and good forecasts of social needs, then they will cease to be effective as social catalysts and will lose credibility both with the arts constituency and the public; if they do not operate astutely in the political arena they will alienate ministerial and parliamentary support and ultimately their source of supply; if they do not prove to be at least as smart as the bureaucracy, they will find themselves hobbled by systems inappropriate to their requirements; if they do not have good staffing and administrative arrangements, they will find themselves eternally competent to handle last year's problems.

7 COMMON PROBLEMS

a) Democracy and the arts

46 Democratisation of culture or cultural democracy

The democratisation of culture versus cultural democracy remains a focus of controversy, whether regarded as the central dilemma for arts councils or an old and tired argument. It nevertheless continues to affect most major issues about the arts council as a type of institution, about the ways in which the arts can service social development, about entitlement to arts subsidies, about the policy-making process. There is a continuing awareness of the problems of reflecting democratic principles and responding to democratic demands in providing public support for the arts. Some issues facing an arts council in a democracy are practical and administrative; some are matters of moral scruple or social conscience; others are the inspiration of fierce political or philosophic debate. The argument directs itself not only at funding priorities but at the structure, policies, decision-taking processes and public relations of arts councils. It has been fuelling recent cultural discussion in the Council of Europe, which can perhaps afford the luxury of a strongly theoretical base to its debates; it has, in more practical terms, generated pressure in the United States for state arts councils to be involved in the workings of the National Endowment; it has brought calls in Britain and Australia for election rather than appointment of members to arts councils. It is an increasing element in challenges to the judgements of arts councils - even to their right to make judgements at all - and in demands for new criteria for the distribution of public funds in support of the arts.

47 The main issues

Broadly speaking the options are these. The democratisation of culture implies efforts to make traditional and the best of contemporary culture more widely accessible - something which most arts councils are in fact required by their charter to do. Cultural democracy as a viewpoint sees no particular value in doing any such thing and demands that priority should be given instead to developing the creative capacities of individuals with the help of animateurs and community artists - something which most arts councils would like to claim they also undertake. Indeed few arts council administrators would see any difficulty in accommodating both

objectives in a public arts policy, even though there might be differences of view as to their relative importance. The cultural democracy cause cannot be regarded as essentially (or even primarily) the product of economic necessity. It is for many people a genuinely held philosophy of the arts and their social function, and one which cannot be dismissed solely as a response to diminishing government funding.

48 National differences in definition

It should be remembered that the term 'community arts' means something different in Britain from Australia, New Zealand or the United States. In these and other countries, community or expansion arts are concerned with stirring the grass roots, so that arts council funds go to nourish that growth, usually by applying professional skills in some way to help improve the quality and vigour of amateur activity. In most of these countries community arts comprise workshops, festivals, artists-in-residence, community arts officers paid to work with local government, visiting tutors, animateurs, competitions and co-operatives. They are mainly rather conventional programmes involving strong amateur participation. From time to time, however, they spawn those wild aspirations which are the life blood of the arts. In Britain, in addition to programmes of this type, some community artists see their work as the spearhead of the cultural democracy attack, a somewhat politicised movement with a strong and trenchant intellectual thrust or with unjustifiable intellectual pretensions, according to your point of view. The cultural democrats aim is to undermine what they see as insidious attempts by the instrument of a state establishment (the arts council) to impose an alien culture on the working class, thereby indulging in cultural colonialism or cultural imperialism.

49 Amateur and professional

Most arts councils used to take a firm stance against supporting amateur activity and directed funds instead towards the training and support of professional individuals or institutions, giving priority to high artistic standards which could not be achieved without public finance. The choices were not easy and it cannot be denied that there was an element of snobbery in some judgements about which art forms were worthy of support (opera, classical ballet, drama) and which other (crafts, jazz, operetta, film, festivals) were straying towards the bad lands of popular taste. There was a strong reaction in many countries in the sixties against too narrow and conventional an interpretation of the responsibilities of a government patron. Arts councils were forced to look not only at their obligation to artists but at their obligation to the consumer and to the community as a whole, acknowledging in the process that talent is not born of immaculate conception but struggles up rather from a community base. To deprive the general community of artistic stimulus and encouragement was therefore seen by many councils as likely to limit the talent available finally to the arts. Most arts administrators came to believe that it was possible and desirable to accommodate in a single government programme both support for excellence and for increasing community access to excellence. They still do.

50 The criterion of excellence

The notion that community arts are identified with the amateur and are lacking in the elusive quality of excellence is no longer valid. Professionals of talent and dedication are now working in the community arts field. The criterion of excellence formerly reserved for the structured and traditional forms, socially identified also with a minority middle-class, has also to be modified. It may well now be better related to aim and achievement within any kind of art form, to include the less formal activities as well as established forms. The word 'élitist' has lost its original meaning of excellence and is loosely equated with a minority appeal.

51 Social and political overtones

The cultural democrats claim that the community arts cater for the balance of the population and in particular for the neglected working class. This would seem to underestimate both the capacity

and the common sense of the working class. It ignores the sense of history and, in Britain for instance, the tradition of adult education. The intrusion of assertive and intellectually vociferous social arguments tends to polarise some elements which could reasonably be expected to co-exist - individual as against communal activity, structures as against spontaneous and informed, art-forms enjoyed by minorities whether middle-class or working class. There is an obvious need for careful evaluation and definition within all areas of the debate. Without raising the quality of the arguments, arts councils find it difficult to exercise objective judgement.

52 Ethnic differences

Many arts councils are holding back on support to amateurs believing, as does the Arts Council of Great Britain that, although amateur activity is of great importance in the total spectrum of a nation's arts, support for amateur activity is not a proper function for it, given limited funds and given too that there are other sources of support for amateurs, notably local government. While this side-steps the issue of professional artists involved in community arts, it raises another aspect of the definition of 'amateur' in countries where arts activity is a tradition inherited by their peoples and inherent in their upbringing. The need to maintain these activities usually lies, in these cases, in the hands of the central government. The question has to be asked if there is not some responsibility on governments to stimulate such work and the public response to it in countries like Papua New Guinea and Ghana. The strength of cultural activity lies at village level rather than in professionalism as it exists in other countries. This may not necessarily be solely an arts council responsibility or cost, but could involve local government and education authorities.

53 Shared responsibility

In recent years certain aspects of arts activity, notably those instigated by or provided for 'the community' as distinct from known devotees of particular art forms for minority audiences, have been seen as providing benefit for audience and participants, sometimes one and the same. The question is therefore debated by arts councils whether they are bound to extend their support into social integration and therapy. It could be argued, and often is, that the

principal responsibility of arts councils should be to develop the arts and promote their enjoyment, while the resolution of social problems should primarily be the responsibility of agencies or departments set up and financed to handle social development and welfare, using all the resources available to them including the arts. It is difficult to see how arts councils can find the best ways to help music, theatre, crafts, film, literature and painting without an eye to the social context, or how they can make choices about the pace and direction of development without some thought for the ways in which the resulting arts resources will be utilized. Some arts councils, in fact, have social obligations imposed on them by their legislation. These may not, however, necessarily involve direct financial and policy intervention. One practical consequence of encouraging other agencies of government to cover the cost of incorporating arts activities and services in their work is that in the long run it is likely to attract more government finance overall to the arts and to alleviate the vulnerability of arts councils in times of financial stringency. It therefore makes sense for the cost of applied arts resources to be placed with those departments and agencies which consume them rather than with the arts council which finances their development and quality.

54 Advocacy for the arts

In this, as in other matters, the arts council's advocacy may be a powerful factor in discussing the arts and co-operating with other agencies to provide whatever is appropriate for these agencies and for the people they serve. It may well be that long-established bureaucratic systems in the social development field are slow to realise what services the arts can offer them, and arts administrators may need to proselytize. In order to infiltrate and enlighten officials on the help which the arts can provide in education and in schemes to help the sick, the handicapped, the aged, migrants, racial minorities and other social groups, it may be necessary, initially at least, for arts councils to produce and even to pay for the early stages. The more people who come to see the arts as both splendid in themselves and a useful practical resource the better it will be both for society and for the arts.

b) Criteria for financial support of the arts

55 Judgement of content

The element of community arts, seen by some to be politically subversive, raises the wider question of the judgement of content in the work of grant applicants. It might be held that it would be difficult to take seriously any artist applying for help while proclaiming the need to demolish the institution or government from which he was seeking funds. Those who would oppose this form of discrimination could adduce certain parallels with the academic world where public funds support people whose political and social views and publications would be no more radical than the work and ideas of community artists. No-one connected with the support of the arts would wish to embark on the suppression of dissidence by withholding government support for the art form or activity put forward, but there is nonetheless some diffidence about giving public money to artists for the expression of ideas which might appear to be politically seditious and socially destructive.

Much contemporary art, particularly the experimental and avant-garde, deals explicitly in political and social issues. To present the unfamiliar, to mention or display what is usually unmentionable and hidden in society, and to do this in an unfamiliar style is likely to have a shock impact at the time. Yet it is the passage of time and changing standards of what is permissible which change attitudes and remove the initial outrage. An arts agency has to exercise what judgement it can muster not to exclude the innovative and provocative. Such work is not self-sustaining, nor is it likely to attract private patronage.

56 Judgements and the public forum

Theoretically a bold attitude might be justified, but an arts council is an official body subjected to media and parliamentary scrutiny. It could happen that a comparatively small number of these projects could put at risk important national programmes supported by government. In a conflict with public taste, an arts council, however supportive, is likely to lose a confrontation with public outrage on their behalf. Arts councils cannot afford to be discredited; their wider cause is always at stake. They must therefore look to other ways of achieving their ends. It is possible to ensure through budget management that the avant-garde and the

politicised arts are well supported without being directly identified with their manifestations.

57 The general exercise of judgement

With challenge and criticism from the recipients of grants, from government, the media and the public at large, arts councils operating in a democracy must somehow adopt a stance and modus operandi between the unacceptably shocking and the reactionary in their general tenets. Many people regard it as one of the primary functions of arts councils to make qualitative judgements of a quite specific kind. Indeed, most arts councils do this as part of daily activity, with members or panels looking at manuscripts, performances, paintings, films, pots and project ideas in order to choose between one grant candidate and another on the basis of quality or some other criterion. It could be argued though that judgements and choices made by an arts council or any central government authority should basically be strategic in nature - judgements about objectives for developing particular art forms or for the social application of the arts, choices about the way in which objectives can be achieved, evaluation of past efforts, statements of priority. It is of no consequence if it is necessary for arts councils, in the early stages of their work, to be closely involved with setting up grant programmes, making specific choices between projects or companies or individuals. Perhaps this function will always be necessary in respect of new schemes. But central government agencies should not stay indefinitely in that role.

58 Grants to individuals

The choice of talented individuals and of the most effective means of helping them present particular dilemmas. One method is to arrange commissions, publication or purchases of their work. This is likely to further the career of the established artist, less useful to the developing talent which may not have reached the appropriate level. Direct grants can be a relief from the pressures of making a living at another job and relegating creative work to spare time. A warning to arts councils bent on making judgements is the difficulty of being right. Instant omniscience and total impartiality are likely to be demanded of people who dare to give public money to this artist rather than that. The artist himself is also exposed to daunting publicity.

59 Public statements of intent

Vociferous demands for information about arts council judgements pose considerable problems for a public institution, including breaches of essential confidentiality with regard to applicants and fear of libel suits if opinions honestly held and fearlessly expressed by panel members are made public property. It is becoming increasingly difficult to argue that a public body should not be frank about its processes and criteria. In the case of arts councils, such a development is likely in some respects to be counter-productive, not only from the point of view of the artist whose interests may be ill-served by the establishment of an official pecking order or by disclosure of his affairs, but also from the point of view of the council's continuing capacity to do its work without fear or favour. Faced with the prospect of media spotlight, law suits, political criticism or abuse from unsuccessful applicants (or their congressmen), members may be reluctant truly to speak their minds and may veer towards a stance of collective caution. In any case, no matter how scrupulous and informed the judgements, how important or how insignificant the occasion, an arts council is likely to be in a 'no win' situation.

60 The arts council as pacemaker or preserver of tradition

It is debatable whether an arts council should reasonably impose on society its own plan for cultural objectives and its own view of desirable standards. If it promotes standards which are clearly ahead of public taste, if it creates through the placement of its funds one pattern of arts development rather than another, it may be seen as manipulative and paternalistic. If it takes a more passive line, reflecting contemporary standards, basing policy on response to random pressures and requests, it may risk debasing achievement in the arts to the lowest common denominator of taste. The question also arises about the value or danger of publishing or not publishing a national manifesto or statement of policy when other groups in the community substitute their own national blueprints for the arts. A too closely detailed policy statement may result at worst in the artist attempting to accommodate to arts council systems and standards set by them. The more judgements are concentrated in a single institution, the more artists and arts organisations are likely to have to concen-

trate on dealing with that institution instead of getting on with what it is they most want to do. The result may simply affect the way in which they feel they must present their case; it may be more serious forms of self-censorship relating to substance.

c) Devolution

61 Democracy and centralisation

The hazards of systematised patronage centred in a single organisation exist in its own structural problems internally and the breadth of responsibility which calls its image and operation into question externally. In the context of democracy it is claimed that arts councils could be considered undemocratic because they concentrate in a single institution the patronage functions of a whole community. There could be unfortunate practical consequences in the accumulating challenge and criticism. A loss of both funds and credibility might well result from continued adverse comment, no matter how ill-founded, and sharing the power of patronage with other bodies could be considered not only more democratic but much more prudent in the longer term. An alternative is devolution.

62 The United States experience

The National Council in Washington is required by its Act to devolve 20% of its funds each year to the state arts councils. It also gives block monies for particular programmes, such as the artists-in-schools scheme, which it considers can more properly be administered at state level close to the actual activity. The National Endowment has clearly learned to live with this part of its charter and even to see certain advantages in it. There have also been moves in some other countries to loosen the grip on the central purse-strings and to take expenditure closer to the beneficiaries.

63 Pros and cons

It can be argued that the central organisation has acquired the staffing and membership of experts in many fields. Over the years it has been able to build up a pattern and tradition. On the other side it could equally well be argued that one of the general responsibilities of arts councils, in strengthening the base of arts support in the community, is to help cultivate in other bodies those skills of judgement and commitment which they perceive in themselves. One of the best ways of doing this may well be to place blocks

of funds with other bodies on whatever terms and conditions the councils decide are most likely to fulfil their own broad objectives, being prepared if necessary to let other people make the mistakes from which they themselves are not always entirely exempt.

d) Ethnic arts

64 Variety of ethnic arts policies

There is a very wide spectrum of needs and appropriate policy for the multiplicity of circumstances for which ethnic or minority arts policies must cater. The United States has huge racial blocs, overlaid on a mesh of national cultural groups of migrant origin and, beneath that, the American Indians. Britain has the residual migrant groups from a world empire; Canada, the French/British cultural tug-of-war, as well as indigenous Eskimos and Indians and resident migrant groups from many countries. In Australia the split is not simply European versus Aboriginal; of the European population, 20% were born in other countries and a further 20% have parents who were migrants. New Zealand's European population is predominantly British; its powerful minority group is Maori/Polynesian. Ghana and Papua New Guinea have marked regional and tribal differences - in the case of Papua New Guinea, 700 different languages. Both attitudes and practical measures range from the preservation of traditional arts to the promotion of contemporary activity and originality. Each country works within a particular frame of reference.

65 Canadian practice

The Canada Council applies the same criteria to its indigenous ethnic groups, for instance the Amer-Indians and the Eskimos, as to white artists eligible for support. Subsidy is therefore given for professionalism and excellence irrespective of race or colour, and qualities are supported in all art forms. For example, their art bank has work from Indians and Eskimos and a fine black theatre company's work is funded. It is pointed out that 55% of the population is neither French nor English. This factor has led to the establishment of multi-cultural councils to support the multiplicity of arts, literature, language etc, both at provincial and national level. It is a matter of concern to some contemporary practising arts that the emphasis and consequent expenditure in the multi-cultural area are

disproportionately great compared with support for contemporary art.

66 Australian practice

Australia shares some of the problems common to America, Canada, New Zealand and other countries. Two hundred years ago the only culture of the Australian continent was Aboriginal; by the middle of this century, that Aboriginal culture has been all but obliterated by the social, political and economic impact of a dominant European population. White Australians long shared a widespread assumption, inherited from the nineteenth century, that the Aboriginals would, and should for their own good, ultimately be assimilated and disappear as a racial and cultural element. It was almost a self-fulfilling prophecy; contact with white society struck at the very core of Aboriginal life, destroying cultural beliefs and practices on which Aboriginal dignity and vitality depended. The national conscience was stirred in the sixties, and one consequence was the establishment by the Australia Council of an Aboriginal Arts Board, comprised of tribal and urban Aboriginals, to try to preserve, revive and develop those elements of Aboriginal culture which they themselves were loath to see disappear.

The programme has had considerable success. Bark painting, sculpture, artefacts, music and dance have all revived, as have inter-tribal gatherings for ceremonial and cultural purposes. It is heavily subsidised survival, of course, but in that regard it does not differ from other arts activity which is dependent upon public funds. There is, however, a substantial change in the basis of the activity. It is now, to a degree, artificially stimulated and largely divorced from the traditional religious, tribal and ceremonial inspiration which was originally its raison d'être. Nonetheless, arts programmes have helped create some basis on which Aboriginals can, if they choose, continue to live in tribal areas; can, if the generation gap is not too devastating, pass on traditional values and lifestyles; can, if they wish, sustain, for the time being at least, the private and sacred practices which lie at the heart of their culture.

67 Ghana and Papua New Guinea

These countries are not having to find ways of integrating external cultural elements in a national programme

of arts development. The colonial exit has, to some extent, resolved that issue for the time being. They are looking rather at the means of stimulating different stages of internal cultural development - from hinterland artists untouched by the contemporary situation through to support for people already exposed through education and contact to ideas, forms, materials and techniques from the international contemporary arts repertoire. Arts councils in both countries have sought to safeguard their contemporary national art forms from domination by Western cultural standards which, in Commonwealth countries, tend not to be the best manifestations of Western culture. To this end both countries have adopted the concept of encouraging modern artists to take traditional themes and develop twentieth century art forms rooted in their ancient ways and beliefs.

68 Special migrant provision

In addition to the preservation of the indigenous arts heritage in, say, Canada and Australia, and the more integrated cultural development in some Commonwealth countries, migrant-based ethnic programmes are also included in many arts council activities. These programmes have two elements, both of which have their hazards. The first if the preservation of the ethnic arts in their traditional form, which could in modern reproduction lose quality and relevance to the point of being debased. The second is the encouragement of new cultural manifestations as part of a new mainstream of modern culture. This could lead to complete merging of different cultural elements which would result in losing their intrinsic character. Neither should be exclusive of the other. A policy devised by an arts council is difficult to define or practice which can at the same time respond as well as help to initiate without exerting a flat-ening pressure.

69 General observation

Policies designed to help the cultural survival of indigenous minorities cannot be justified if they are no more than a vicarious exercise in nostalgia by a dominant social group or a token gesture of expiation for more devastating social and economic intrusion. Certainly it is true that art forms devoid of their basic inspiration are likely to become empty and ossified. Development and a degree of integration is desirable provided that it does not result in absorption at the expense of ethnic individuality. The criterion of appropriate excellence is an indispensable guideline.

70 Basic premises of the relationship between arts and education

It is generally agreed that the relationship of education and the arts is the most difficult and far-reaching problem in current arts policy. It is also asserted that the problems rest on how to educate the educators, how to turn traditional education philosophies upside down and bring the revolution into teachers' colleges, curriculum centres, academic accreditation boards and classrooms. The aim is to move towards the realisation of the concept of the arts as being essential to the complete person and to golden vistas of enriched leisure time, as well as providing a palliative for chronic unemployment or for the physically, socially or economically deprived.

Far-reaching discussion is taking place at a time when economic retrenchment is affecting expenditure on education, inhibiting the maintenance of existing systems, let alone change and development. The relationship of the arts and education is already clouded, in Britain and America as well as elsewhere, by suspicion of arts as part of the less serious and basic aspects of life. All who are convinced of the intrinsic importance of the arts as an acknowledged part of education have, early on in their advocacy of change, to attempt to define the mutual benefits of the arts and education. The hoped for initiative must come from understanding and initiative on both sides for the common aims of fostering artistic excellences, and audiences who are sensitive to it from early years, as well as the training of arts teachers and arts practitioners.

71 Practical measures towards rapport

In recent years steps have been taken in most countries to define these mutual benefits and to establish a dialogue between arts administrators and educationalists. Some countries, the United States and Australia among them, have held national enquiries into education and the arts. Others have set up reviews, interdepartmental enquiries or schemes for regular planning and liaison. The impetus has frequently come from the arts side, partly because arts planners, having arrived later, identified deficiencies in the education system as a prime obstacle to development and propagation of the arts. Early arts budgets, minute alongside the vast allocations to education, fast became a target for refugees from hide-bound education systems who found ready sympathy in arts councils and began to drain off the limited arts

appropriations for innovation in education and even for augmentation of the basic curriculum arts component. In certain countries such as the United Kingdom, these moves were inhibited by Treasury regulations restricting dual expenditure. But in other countries complementary expenditure or duplication was possible and was, at the beginning, even encouraged by arts administrations in the hope that their colleagues in the education system would be impressed by the resulting models and would as a consequence review their own priorities for expenditure.

72 Basic information for action

In a subject which promotes such strong reactions on both sides, it is essential that the factual basis for action should be strong and that it should be contributed by both sides, as well as by and through arts advocacy bodies such as the National Endowment for the Arts in America. The proliferation of reviews and enquiries has served to provide a good deal of basic information about what is and, more frequently, what is not being done to put education to the service of the arts and vice-versa. In the follow-up, searching questions are being asked about the apportioning of policy and financial responsibility and funds between arts and education administrations; systems are being devised and appointments made with a strong emphasis on co-ordination, given the complexity of the relationship and the variety of points at which arts/education interests touch or overlap.

73 Practical measures provided through arts bodies - the American model

The experience of the National Endowment's advocacy has proved the need for practical incentive measures since decisions for change must finally rest with education bodies at state and national level. At elementary level, the personal interest of classroom teachers is augmented by visiting specialist teachers or by artists who form part of the National Endowment for the Arts programme, artists-in-the-school, or by subsidised visits by school children to performing studios. At secondary level, the popular electives of visual arts and music, which have traditionally represented the limits of the arts in high school education, are now being augmented by other art forms, with help from specialist teachers and practising artists. At tertiary level, studio arts courses, which were introduced in a small number of universities and colleges after the war, are now beginning

more widely to complement study courses in art history, music, theatre and literature. Endowment schemes also go beyond the formal curriculum into lifelong community programmes, introduce popular and new art forms - jazz and media; and encourage theatres, museums, galleries and libraries to see themselves as supplementing formal education by aggressive promotion schemes and use of the media.

74 The Australian experience

The Australian experience was in many ways similar to the American. In 1976 the Australia Council and the Australian Schools Commission mounted a national study of the relationship between the arts and education which it was hoped would assist forward planning in the development and application of arts resources and at the same time stimulate people to look again at traditional education ideas and practice. The report suggested significant changes in education policy and organisation, with a much higher percentage of arts activity in the curriculum, in teacher training and use (in particular the use of artist teachers), together with special treatment for minority groups including the especially talented, the handicapped, migrants and people in remote areas, and the incorporation of arts facilities in school design. Looking at artistic and community interests, it called for improved quality in television programmes for young people, for community-based arts officers and for increased community use of school facilities. It suggested that libraries, galleries and museums might act as education resource centres, providing arts services and opportunities for school leavers; and it proposed special performing arts groups to provide drama, dance and music services to schools, and opportunities for special arts activity through holiday camps, residential training courses and tertiary institutions. The report postulated more varied and enlightening objectives than have so far characterised Australian education. Vital changes in education philosophy and practice can be effected only with the concurrence and support of governments, public service and other organisations providing services related to education. The report therefore called for changes in political priorities, in national broadcasting and television services, in the role of galleries, museums and performing arts companies, in the social philosophy of trade union and

employer groups, in the policy and funding priorities of the Australia Council and the state arts authorities, along with a sharper sense of responsibility on the part of the media. The report raised questions of profound social importance. If implemented, it would in the long run have a stimulating and beneficial effect on Australian cultural and intellectual life.

75 The framework for progress

Both the American and Australian experiences emphasise the complexity, not only of the problems, but of the bodies and individuals in government, education and the arts through whom change must be implemented. Established and interlocking systems have to be geared to common aims and essential funding policy must provide both the impetus and the means. The difficulties are emphasised also by the British experience, encountering limitations imposed both upon the arts and on education by established Treasury retrictions on dual departmental expenditure, of arts administrators casting covetous eyes on the massive education and community resources still locked in the grip of unimaginative local government, of limited philosophies of education, of narrow concepts of teacher training and of intransigent unions. The lead through all such problems is difficult to perceive. The Arts Council of Great Britain recently appointed an education officer to discover what progress could be made. The American government and the National Endowment for the Arts jointly appointed a senior officer whose work was intended to be mainly liaison and persuasion.

76 The need for structural change in education

It remains indubitable, however, that such officers and their powers of persuasion remain finally ineffective unless reinforced by basic structural changes in the education system at all levels. These would necessarily involve basic curricular changes to incorporate the arts and the financial resources needed to implement them in practical terms.

77 Joint bodies and co-funding

It is indubitable also that general advocacy and liaison provide an initial context but that it is essential for the arts councils to make their own ideas of educational priorities clear to education authorities.

78 The Dublin experience

A practical and fully representative joint body, such as is being contemplated by the Arts Council in Dublin together with the Department of Education may provide a useful model.

A planning committee also has been set up within the Department of Education to concern itself with the arts over the next five to eight years. The liaison with the arts is initiatived by the Education Department's appointment of a senior civil servant to act as liaison officer with the Arts Council.

79 The New Zealand experience

In New Zealand the liaison between the Arts Council and education authorities is very well established. The Director-General of Education sits 'ex-officio' on the Arts Council, and the two bodies jointly provide matching funds for a number of projects within schools. Salaries have been provided by the Education Department for artists to work full-time in schools. National training schools for dance and drama are jointly funded. An interesting recent development has been in-service visits jointly funded for teachers of the arts to study overseas. Practical help in terms of funding premises has extended the arts into the community through the extra-mural use of community colleges and other centres in general use.

80 Ghana

The Arts Council of Ghana believes that schools, being part of the community, should be part of Arts Council activities 'ipso facto'.

81 The spread of change

All these initiatives, proven or potential, may serve to illustrate the wide spread of change needed to integrate the arts into all levels of the community, from the elementary school to the increasingly important area of continuing education outside school and university as well as within their walls.

82 Regionalisation and education

It is argued, and indeed can be demonstrated by examples in some countries' experience, that pressures and co-operation to bring about change generally are better accomplished on local rather than national scales. The Regional Arts Associations brought into being by the Arts Council of Great Britain exemplify such bureaucratic units of a small-scale as compared with the central bureaucracy of the central Arts Council. With regard to education, it is fairly common for education authority members to form a part of the Regional Arts Association's Executive Committee, alongside members of the arts organisations and local government representatives. They all share responsibility for decisions designed to bring

the arts and education together. There are examples of similar collaboration in the Provinces of Canada. The smallness of the operation can, however, prove the opposite to be true. Personal commitment has a good chance of making an effect, but there can be equally striking failure if the reverse is true. Britain's Regional Arts Associations are not without such problems.

The deficiencies of bureaucracy can be just as effective at state and regional level as on the national scale. Local government representatives are as sensitive as their colleagues in central government to factions and personalities; provincial standards are frequently narrow and restrictive. In the long run, it all comes back to people, to personal vision and goodwill as well as to policy design. The process of bringing together the arts and education well demonstrates the interaction of individuals and organisations on which community benefit finally must depend.

9 THE TRAINING OF ARTISTS AND TEACHERS OF THE ARTS

83 Specialist needs

While firm in the belief that education in the arts is the birthright of everyone, all concerned with the arts and education, jointly and individually, have to remember the importance of replenishing the nation's resources of creative and talented people. This fundamental and specialised training is also part of the education system, public and private according to country. Some account therefore must be taken of the needs of the artistically gifted.

84 Papua New Guinea - a special experience

Arts councils, with some exception such as the Arts Council of New Zealand, make no direct contribution to national training schools for the arts. This is partly due in the developed countries to the existing elaborate education system devised without regard to the arts and to the growth of specialist training at a certain stage when a career in the arts is in view. In countries where the arts are traditional practice, on which recent and rapid changes in society have been superimposed, the problem is a different one, as exemplified in the experience of Papua New Guinea. In such a society the arts are not compartmentalised so strictly as in the Western World, and the first tertiary institution set up in New Guinea was therefore inclusive of all the arts on one campus. No specific academic qualifications are required and the atmosphere is geared primarily to creativity. Artists from other countries are from time to time invited to take up a period of residence, to be accessible to students while continuing with their own work.

85 The general experience and problems

While the art school in Papua New Guinea finds it easy to incorporate the teaching of the arts in its creative atmosphere, there are many problems in such an introduction into the systems of the Western World.

86 Teacher attitudes

Some resistance comes from within the schools, not only from the education authority. There is difficulty in winning the support of teachers for proposed changes in the education system involving the arts. Teachers' unions worldwide have in fact been notoriously tough on the question of the employment of artists in schools and of specialist teachers at particular stages in the education process. The Gulbenkian Foundation had some experience of this when its officers were in consultation with teachers and education officials about

the implementation of the Foundation's report on the training of musicians. One point made in the report which might be considered beyond dispute is that the resident, or even the peripatetic, school teachers employed by local education authorities are not normally of a high enough standard to meet the needs of exceptionally gifted music student likely to move through to become professional musicians. But strong objections were raised by the teachers' union to the Foundation about the employment of professional musicians as teachers.

87 Artists' unions

There are objections on the side of the arts as well as of teachers. Artists' unions have raised their voices on behalf of artists involved in education schemes who do not like certain aspects of these programmes and who, in particular, object to being regarded as a cheap way of filling up classroom time, or who feel that artists-in-residence are being treated and judged as teachers rather than as artists. One of the problems of artists-in-residence schemes has been the fact that artists who communicate through their work may not necessarily be good at communicating through more conventional means and above all through the teacher/pupil relationship.

88 Arts councils' misgivings

The move to draw together education and the arts was not unanimously or immediately supported by arts councils themselves. There were misgivings about specific incursions into what was regarded as a separate agency's responsibility for education provision in the community. Artist members overcame their reluctance only by reason of the increased employment opportunities.

89 Quality control in the arts contribution to education

The difficulty of assessing the quality of arts contribution from outside into schools is very much debated, particularly related to the work of theatre-in-education schemes. If the arts are to be an essential element in education, developing in students with their unique resources qualities of comprehension, perception and imagination, and if they are to be used to convey information normally provided by more conventional methods, the question of quality control is obviously of vital importance. If the arts are to be an education medium, children must have access to the very best quality. Arts councils therefore have a particular responsi-

bility to ensure that there are adequate numbers of professional artists and support people because, in the long run, if the theatre aspect is poor, the children will be bored and the project counter-productive.

In many countries where groups perform in schools, there is some formal accreditation system with an audition process determining whether the standard, both from an educational and artistic point of view, is adequate. Whether it is possible to do that without at the same time being tempted to exercise some form of censorship or control over the material used in the performances, particularly where that deals with current political or social issues, is another matter. But the same problem arises in relation to general curriculum evaluation in sociological subjects.

90 Continuity

A general criticism of artists-in-schools and the workshop and theatre-in-education programmes has been the lack of continuity. From the education point of view, that is obviously a serious issue; from the point of view of an arts planner, any provision of artist services which is of sufficient scale to make a major impact on the educational process clearly calls for arts resources which at present do not exist either in terms of professional artists or adequately trained teachers. Resource development and long-range planning is obviously crucial to any satisfactory solution of this problem along with the provision of adequate curricular time.

91 Access to the arts through education

The view is strongly held that education, and in particular continuing education, are central to any policy of increasing access to high quality art, both to prevent people believing, through ignorance or inhibition, that the high arts are not for them and to provide them with the basic tools of knowledge with which to open up appreciation. It seems, however, that the education system itself is not yet geared to accept the arts as integral subjects of the normal curriculum or to use other means available to introduce children to the performing arts, music, painting, sculpture, even literature, beyond examination texts. The need to create every possible means of access is seen as a real move towards cultural democracy, as compared with the extremist and patronising attitudes found to be passed off as such. Experimental schemes, links

with educational agencies at all levels, should be among the arts council's initiatives, to reconcile the interests at present polarised between 'high' arts and community arts and open up opportunities to all ages and social groups.

92 Access through the media and popular entertainment

Television and other means of modern communication have enormous consumption figures in Europe and the United States for televised opera and music, and a potential for growth limited only by finance. It would make sense for arts agencies to finance, directly or indirectly, the resources which are of public benefit, including television. A case could be made also for arts councils to concern themselves with the standard of light entertainment and particularly with the quality and training of talent. The music halls, which used to be the training ground and the repository of popular talent, have virtually disappeared, their place taken by clubs and commercial television, both of which appear to attach little importance to standards and training.

93 The first phase

The first phase of the arts council model was marked by guiding principles of excellence, professionalism and independence within an overall bourgeois democratic structure of government. All the bodies represented have a commitment to artistic excellence, rely on professional advisers to determine that excellence and have written into their founding instruments in one way or another some assurance of independence from government and from political pressures.

94 Pressures for change

These principles are now being challenged:-

- directly by politicians and the bureaucracy at various levels;
- indirectly, by modification of the practice and experience of their application over the years, reflected in proposals to vary internal structures and the mechanism of the operation of arts councils;
- by the strong and visible influence of new members of the Commonwealth.

95 Changing and new relationships

There have always been variations of practice within European countries, but these have not greatly affected the British tradition. Now Britain's involvement in the Council of Europe and the European Community has enforced comparisons with European practice and a defence of the British system. Similar questioning is the result of new relationships with a new kind of Commonwealth since the 1950s, particularly in Africa.

96 Need for sharing and comparing experience

These changing pressures and relationships point to the need to compare experience in order to learn from each other, improve our work and strengthen the strategic role we play in each of our societies in relation to the well-being and growth of the arts, their application in social, political, economic and cultural contexts and in terms of advice to government at various levels. There is a need also to assess and relate this experience to other ways of supporting the arts and to assess and understand these other ways in relation to ourselves. This is a basic need if we are to learn from other experience and conduct international cultural relations in the most fruitful manner.

97 Further discussion issues raised

There is, therefore, an obvious need for some further investigation of the many issues underlying the main issue.

These have included, in the course of the Conference, the relationship between the arts and education in each national tradition, the formulation of policy, the nature and practice of accountability, the concept and development of culture in multi-cultural societies, the obligations of the artist to society and society to the artist, democratisation of culture or cultural democracy, above all, the determination of cultural priorities. Such investigation cannot well be accomplished by occasional international conferences.

98 Future measures
- a forum
- a study centre

The proposal is for two kinds of institution, related but separate in purpose. The first might be an occasional forum, similar to the one just held, no doubt enlarged, but coming together every other year to compare experience and to examine in some depth issues of particular significance at the time. The forum might move from country to country according to which different host assumed responsibility for each meeting. It would publish its proceedings. It would be a medium for the transmission of experience and for the strengthening of institutions concerned with the development and protection of the arts. It would be able to offer a collective wisdom and vision to individual governments. Thus the forum has a specific function

The second institution might be more permanent - a study centre where the issues raised by our biennial forum, as well as other issues, can be examined in very great depth, supported by research and considered not in isolation but in relation to all the relevant social, economic, political and cultural factors. In other words, perhaps an interdisciplinary study centre would be valuable if established on a small scale, interdisciplinary not only between disciplines but also between national cultural experiences and backgrounds. This might make a very strong contribution to resolving some of the problems raised here, supporting the forum's work through its own research and the documentation of other research through the transmission of experience and the provision of information. Especially, if such a centre can establish its own excellence, it would provide a resource on which all might draw in the formulation of policy and the conduct of affairs.

99 Conference reaction to the proposals for a forum

There was general agreement on the need for periodic meetings from which might emerge publications for the attention of governments. It was further agreed that future meetings should focus on specific topics, supported where appropriate with detailed information and statistical analysis.

100 Proposed topics for future meetings

It was proposed that the next forum might deal with public patronage of the arts. It could explore policy and administrative options available to governments wishing to support the arts and looking at some case studies of particular initiatives and different types of administrative machinery. It could seek to determine whether any guidelines formulae or models might be proposed for the effective functioning of an arts council. Arts councils have been the subject of frequent comment and criticism, but there has been relatively little objective analysis of the factors which affect them, and almost nothing in the way of comparative studies between councils in different countries. A publication from a professional conference on this general theme would be a valuable reference document in public administration.

101 Conference reaction to the proposal for a study centre

It was generally agreed that such a centre could provide useful practical services, particularly the possibility of a regular digest of information on current research, policy, programme and administrative developments. There were reservations about the practicality of an international data bank and information services, as against the establishment of national services which could be made compatible with each other in framework and take into account information with international application. It was agreed that the proposal should be more fully explored taking into account these and many issues of purpose, scope, organisation and location.