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NEW REGIONAL ORGANIZATION AND CULTURAL WORK IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA

by Vladimir Jurik

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## NEW REGIONAL ORGANIZATION AND CULTURAL WORK IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA

Following is a translation of an article by  
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The new regional organization has one of the most significant positions in the series of action points through which the ideas of the XIth Congress of the KSC (Komunisticka Strana Ceskoslovenska -- Communist Party of Czechoslovakia) are realized in actual life. The new action points exercise through their phenomenal organization a relatively deep effect not only on the future development of production power and socialistic production conditions but also on the way of life of the people and the further evolution of the cultural revolution.

The reasons motivating the new action points are economical in nature. However we must not forget the fact that even the situation on the cultural front has reached a state when a new territorial solution is necessary. Conclusions of the Congress of Socialistic Culture and experience from the realization of the directives of the UV KSC (Ustredni Vybor Komunisticke Strany Ceskoslovenska -- Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia) on education pointed out several serious phenomena, especially, the politically-organizational weakness of the districts, the staggering difference of their level of accomplishment from that of the regions, and the lack of conditions enabling them to bring the working masses into action. On the small community level we have seen for a long time now the fact that their relatively small size limits the circle of the possible cultural services as well as the formation of social forces which would be sufficiently equal to the new tasks of cultural development.

The fact that new action points are necessary even in the cultural sector is supported not just by past experiences but primarily by the needs of future development which can be roughly placed into three task groups: I - to reach the broadest development of the cultural life of the masses, II - to expand professional and folk creativity, and III - to secure organizationally political and cadre prerequisites for further cultural development. Considering these tasks several questions come into mind in connection with the new conditions. It is obvious that the new situation will not exist without its effect on the unification of all cultural expressions on the basis of socialistic ideology, on the subordination of cultural questions to political primacy, and especially on the unification of educational and cultural work with the needs of socialistic buildup in

the village. From this point of view it is quite obvious what role will be played by the new regional organization in facilitating the overcoming of the phenomena separating economical tasks from ideological and culturally political tasks, and in allowing for long-term cultural planning on the basis of more clearly defined economical units.

With the practice of cultural planning is also directly connected the fact that simultaneously with the heightening of the general cultural standards of the workers there also occurs an internal differentiation in the rhythm of development which is directed toward equalization of cultural evolution among the various regional units. Thus, even in the province of culture we strive to insure equal availability and equal possibility of personality development and of development of all the human creative powers not only from the point of view of class -- i.e., by eliminating all the negative, limiting aspects of a class culture -- but also from the point of view of regional distribution. The reasons for this are not merely ethical in nature. Their basis contains the political interests of our whole society in developing all of its potential abilities and creative powers in the interest of reaching our communistic goals. Regional organization and deeper grounding of socialistic democracy are closely united with the question of a fresh source of stimuli and cultural, and, in connection with this, even with the question of cultural creation and creativity of the people in general. Considering the new situation from the culturally regional point of view one must ask the question whether and to what degree is it right to support the development of individuality with a culturally regional profile, etc.

If the new regional organization will play an important part in all these respects then the various administrative levels will not have equal part in the realization of all the tasks and aims. Great differences will exist especially between the role given to regions and the primary mission assigned to the districts.

The new regions are characterized economically by the dominant character of certain production branches and by their place in the regional division of labor; culturally there is no such characterization. As in the past the regional borders do not correspond to the old ethnographic and national units. Cultural relations formed through current evolution are not being changed; the old culturally oriented provinces on the whole do not have anything in common with the borderlines of regional administration. For instance, the newly created East-Bohemian region unites on one side the artificially divided province of Krkonose, the culturally historical area of Hradec and Pardubice, but on the other hand this new regional unit encompasses a portion of the Ceskomoravska Vysocina, areas around Svitava and Moravska Trebova which have a previous cultural orientation toward another area. In the same way the spheres of influence of cultural action points and organizations, in many cases are not identical with the regional administrative borders;

the tour provinces of theaters reach from region to region; the museum collecting provinces are delimited regionally and reach across the borders of districts and regions; in some instances even the sphere of influence of provincial peoples observatories is interregionally delimited etc. This situation, although not the rule in all the cases, points out some of the features of future development. One of these is the fact that the increased distances between the individual administrative units and the territorial units governed as well as the needs of even distribution of cultural opportunities will demand a much greater development of the cultural cooperation between the individual regions and districts.

In economy the goal is to reach harmony between the economical and administrative action. In culture we have no such goals. Up to a certain point this is supported by the problem of reciprocal relations in the net of administrative and cultural centers in our republic. In the past decade it seemed that the stormy development of regional cities, in which many investment means were concentrated, indicated that the rising evolutionary line of administrative and cultural centers was entirely one and the same. In actuality we have here entities of only partial value. Even if we admit that higher administrative functions means also a tie up of certain culturally administrative functions, we must remember, that not only these but also other historical and mainly economical circumstances are responsible for the final determination of the cultural importance of the individual cities. Even today we could name many domestic and foreign places whose cultural importance is not the least bit equivalent to their administrative designation. This fact becomes even clearer when we consider the perspectives of the future, for while the number of administrative centers will be continuously decreased by the gradual communistic organization of society, the number of cultural centers will continuously increase. Their development will be in the future connected with other factors than administrative functions. At this very time we find ourselves in an era which, in this respect, appears to be a crossroads of present day evolution.

In this already there is an answer to the frequent questions of citizens and cultural workers in connection with the fate of some of the present day regional and district cities. There is no need to be afraid that these would be substantially impoverished in their importance and influence on cultural life after the new regional measures are put into action. Traditions, richness of cultural, enlightening and educational institutions, the experience of the cadres and the funds of libraries, galleries, museum collections, etc., all these will remain untouched. On the contrary, the aim of future cultural policy will be to increase the importance and influence of all these institutions. As a first example of this effort we can take the fact that various district and regional cultural functions, e.g. those connected with methodology, will be purposely spread over a

larger number of cities including those not connected with administration. From the very beginning it is necessary to guard against possible centralized hoarding of functions and investment means for cultural development within administrative centers, and against the tie up of cultural advantages with localization of administrative duties.

All the circumstances of present day evolution prove the rightness of the conscientious effort to increase the number of the local centers of scientific and art activity which in their importance would reach beyond the framework of their region and the scope of their administrative mission. Building of a greater number of cultural centers provides for the expression of a greater number of talents and stimulates healthy competition which is the necessary machinery of creative growth. This policy, however, does not exclude but on the contrary stresses the necessity for development of a national, historical, cultural center such as Prague. The capital city of a socialistic state will attract the attention of the nation and of the world to a much greater degree than in the past. For instance, at the present time Prague is becoming a world famous musical center due to its Prague Spring Festival, yet, this does not clash with the fact that many other cities also participate in this great endeavor.

In relation to the remaining territory of the republic we will always strive to preserve proportional handling of sources and to keep the creative intelligentsia from connecting the idea of a possibility for full development and growth of its talents only with the atmosphere and traditions of the capital city. This has been a frequent case even though numerous facts prove that the reality is different. For instance it was not the life in rural districts and towns, but the concentration in large cities and the professional isolation of a definite circle of certain people, that formed the rich soil in which cosmopolitan intellectuality was created, and which supported occasionally even tendencies toward abstraction and pessimism. In a socialistic culture we will never consider the liquidation of the large cultural centers but rather the liquidation of the inherent differences between these centers and the so-called marginal provinces. Under socialistic conditions the basis on which these differences are eliminated is embodied in the fact that as a result of the decentralizing line of cultural buildup the power of attraction of various socio-cultural environments is becoming equalized. This occurs not only in the direction of removal of all objective differences, which is not completely possible anyhow, but also through the effect of moral factors which bring conscientious intelligentsia to remote places. Future will undoubtedly develop in such a way that while the provinces outside the centrum will not have all the advantages of a capital city, they will have many factors lacking in the capital. Thus, the centrum and the provinces will be unusually close to each other and will become more and more assimilated into a single cultural organism.

Even in our country evolution will take this direction. The new territorial organization will strengthen the specificity of the prevalent economical conditions in the individual regions and up to a certain point also in the districts. In connection with a broad transfer of legislative powers this will also mean a change in the role played by these new territorial units in cultural policies. Up to now the districts and to a degree also the regions have been pursuing educational rather than cultural policies. Course setting in the province of professional creativity was missing to a degree from the scope of their possibilities. Because of this, their policy had in its results and increasing but all the same unsubstantial effect on creative orientation whether in the province of literature and art or the province of science and technology. Even though provincial theaters, branches of the Artists' Union, and many other professional organizations and artistic institutions have been active in the present day regions, we have been still dealing only with a section of the great province of spiritual creation.

As a result of the XIth Congress of the party, and thanks to the concrete expression of its policy at the Congress of Socialistic Culture, we are in this respect faced with many new and important phenomena. The artistic competition in honor of the 15th anniversary of the liberation of the CSR (Ceskoslovenska Republika - Czechoslovak Republic) becomes a tool in the hands of the national councils of all degrees with which they can help in the union of artistic creation with the life of the people and with which they can give it the one orientation that the life of our regions and districts demands. The regions also received into their sole jurisdiction the Regional Pedagogical Institutes, the first institutions of higher learning to be so situated. It is fairly certain that also some of the film studios as well as some of the specialized, centralized editorial boards will be transferred into the provinces and that independent regional publishing houses with broader facilities will be instituted. The greater territorial scope and the requirements emanating from the clearer economical character of the new regions will undoubtedly stimulate even a more extensive regional form of film production (local newsreels, films with regional topics etc.) as well as the need for a more colorful use of the broadcasting devices of the state radio and wire broadcast etc. On the whole, all this will mean that the new politically regional arrangement will create more favorable conditions which will allow the regions to pursue cultural policy on a broader scale and which will transmit into actual life one of the most serious conclusions of the Congress of Socialistic Culture which demands a proper distribution of cultural workers, more extensive contact between artists and workers and generally a closer union of culture with the life of the people.

With the creation of new territorial units we may expect also increase in regional cultural work both in connection with the

problems of general cultural buildup and also with those of literature, science, art, folk art creativity, etc. Correct understanding of cultural regionalism from the point of view of future development is largely connected with the theoretical question of the orientation of the perspectives of cultural development: does it point to a high but overall standard of cultural consciousness or does it also encompass the expression of certain territorial cultural peculiarities. Generally speaking, the degree of peculiarity in territorial cultural expression is above all a true measure of the degree of man's dependence on the characteristics of his geographical, natural and social environment, and of his isolation within the limits of his territory etc. Development of production powers, expansion of technology and transportation, and the general socialistic liberation of man, generally reduce this degree of dependence. However, all the features we observe in erasing the classical forms of regional culture, which had their origin in feudal disunity, will continue to exist. We cannot hope for the appearance of cultural expressions which would deserve the characterization of expressly regional specificity.

On the other hand it is impossible to imagine that the future riches of cultural expressions would completely engulf and lose their territorial variety and color. The future cultural profiles of regions, districts or other units characterized by certain groups, will be expressed and at least partially differentiated not by any geographical, natural or other peculiarities but rather by the dominant character of certain branches of production and by their effect on the local way of life. In connection with this we can include here a definite rhythm of cultural life, localization of certain sectors of science and technology and also their image in literary and artistic creation. It is interesting to note that for instance the publications of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences dealing with the Kladno area show not only a definite projection of the everyday conditions -- especially those of the mining class -- into the specificity of the theme and orientation of local narratives, but also a small number of superstitious elements as well as a great amount of straight-forwardness, realism, seriousness, etc. [Kladno region - life and culture of the people in an industrial province, CSAV (Ceskoslovenska Akademie Ved - Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences) 1959, page III.] Furthermore, it is also right to support the idea that e.g. the glass industry in the past Liberec region should also be reflected in the cultural mirror of northern Bohemia -- namely in museum collections, libraries, new creations of the Association for Folk Creativity, in the orientation of artistic competitions etc.; for instance the Northern-Bohemian Museum in Liberec already contains an exhibit of Czechoslovak glass from Moscow. A definite difference can be seen also in the more intensive development of several types of cultural establishments e.g. the cooperative clubs in the Jihlava area which also owe their growth to the character local economy and the manner of population on

Ceskomoravska Vysocina and especially to the high number of small communities with a majority of agricultural population etc. We could go on and on enumerating similar cases; the most effective factor, however, will in this case be life itself, and it will depend on the orientation of the cultural workers which ones of the new cultural phenomena will be supported and brought to a higher degree of evolution.

Healthy regionalism is one of the methods which support the development of the creative powers of the people. It represents one of the ways by which not only the intelligentsia but also workers and farmers are pulled into creative activity e.g. in writing of memoirs or factory histories etc. A national cultural buildup directed from the center of the republic cannot in itself sufficiently fill regions, districts and communities with a creative artistic, research or educational activity. That can only be accomplished primarily by the very creative powers of the individual regional or industrial units and then only with the help of the party and the state. Because of this, the new directives of the party, help the districts and regions to acquire either permanently or in a consulting capacity the services of leading artists, scientists, and technologists. On the other hand it is necessary that the working peoples themselves be won over to creative work in literature, art and science within their district or region. It is here that the special task of regionalism begins; to bring into the cultural buildup all the local workers, intelligentsia and cultural powers, to take advantage of all the opportunities presented by cultural institutions, organizations and treasures of regional culture, and to rely on the natural interest of the people in the region in which they live as well as on the idea of healthy competition with other regions and also a rightly understood native pride. The main reason of regionalism is the effort to increase local cultural initiative in harmony with and in support of national interests. The goal is always national interest which, at this level, is realized by properly understood local interests.

It is in this that healthy regionalism differs from local patriotism. Under the rule of capitalism, property interests of the bourgeoisie formed the substance of such locally chauvinistic thinking. Even cultural life was often tainted by the basic ideological character of provincial patriotism which consisted of placing of narrow local interests above the interests of the whole. In creative work this was reflected by a preoccupation with the past, and mainly, by a tendency to lower the quality requirements for local products, as well as by overestimation of domestic values, all of which resulted in the creation of a field of cultural provincialism. An expression of a locally patriotic deviation in cultural endeavor was, in its time, for instance, the activity of the "Circle of Moravian Writers," naturally not in the form of its organization but in its contents and in its idea of influence.

Today, local patriotism belongs to the deviations which are harmful to the interests of the whole, i.e., to the socialistic interests of the workers. However, we should not overestimate its dangers. Nevertheless its consideration still has some immediate significance in connection with the decentralization of cultural autonomy. In some areas the citizens demand cultural establishments which do not correspond either to the possibilities of their locality nor to the needs of their environment; also still current are cases of inability of some public institutions to lift up their thinking to the level of national interests e.g. in the question of interdistrict and interregional use of cultural institutions financed by them, etc.

The new regionally political arrangement and the ensuing deepening of socialistic democracy will have significant effect on further development of educational efforts.

In order that the citizens could fully use all the governing powers given to them and that they could with vision and informality affect the politico-economical and cultural process, they must become thoroughly acquainted with the substance of these processes. Direction presumes a thorough knowledge. The working masses are gradually becoming subjectively conscious of this new situation as of a new stimulus and a need for new kinds of cultural implements; it is a task of society and of its institutions to secure all the conditions necessary for their satisfaction. It is therefore no chance occurrence that in connection with the new regional organization there appears an idea of a unified course of out-of-school education of the people. From small communities to the capital city there will gradually be developed a net of people's schools, people's academies, people's universities and polytechnics, which will enable our citizens to broaden and deepen their general, polytechnical, professional and artistic education, outside the walls of the schoolroom.

Similarly inseparable feature of this new development consists of the new conditions which will be created for the orientation of educational activity by stressing the economical characterization of the new regions and by a partial strengthening of economical and cultural unity of the new districts; the new regional arrangement will facilitate the union of educational activity with economical and political tasks, the lack of which is at this time one of the greatest weaknesses of our educational and cultural work. Thus, e.g. since the production speciality of the North-Moravian region is mining for fuels and metallurgy, these endeavors not only give a thematical orientation to technico-economical propaganda, but also contain the promise of a concentration of the pertinent categories of scientific and technological intelligentsia and a perspective for the further development of research establishments, etc.

The proper utilization of all these possibilities becomes more urgent in connection with the directives of the third five year plan which strive to equalize the onesided features of the profile of

general level of education by an expansion of the professional, technical and polytechnical orientation of educational work. The conclusions of the UV KSC concerning further development and deepening of ideological effectiveness of educational work, criticize, primarily in connection with political orientation, the position of educational work outside the stormy development of science, technology, and culture. If it is generally found, that we should develop more strongly activities which aid in economical buildup and have a more immediate effect in relation to world philosophy and political education, one of the ways used to achieve this, should be the usage of data from the world of sciences, namely from the natural sciences and technology. The lack of knowledge of e.g. the processes in the microcosm of an atomic nucleus and the influence they have on social evolution, does not only mean a lack in general education but also may have consequences in the field of world philosophy and politics. Our times are completely remodeling the concept of general education. In the times of the bourgeois republic a basic knowledge of several humanity specialities formed the substance of this concept, today, when the general level of education has been uplifted and scientific achievement is soaring, it is necessary to include in the group of the basic building blocks of present day education, also orientation in the problems of social existence, political economy and many other scientific, technological and artistic specialities. This new concept is clearly expressed in the study outlines used in educating the young generations. Among workers, who have already quit the schoolroom, however, this question is much more complex. It is therefore the task of educational work to mirror proportionally in its orientation the profile and structure of present day life. Thus, the organizations and institutions whose task is to transmit knowledge to the working peoples are now faced also with the task to spread more broadly the findings of science and technology, including those of the latest scientific specialities which partially affect the future destiny of humanity and which will probably give their name to this historical epoch. These are: cybernetics, electronics, automatization, telemedeanization, atomic physics, the science of semi hydrogens, etc.

Many concrete examples show how much still remains to be done in the teaching of many basic aspects of technical knowledge. For instance, it was shown, that the presentation of the latest industrial exhibit in Brno was frequently meaningless to the viewers because the broad masses of workers were lacking in basic knowledge pertaining to the various mechanisms exhibited. It is also known that the organizers of the television quiz "10x answer" received much lower response in the technical part of the quiz than in other specialities. Similar situation exists also in the people's libraries where the contents of the book collections do not correspond to the needs of polytechnical education; e.g. technical literature represents only 2.05% of the entire collection and the books are loaned out 1.08% of the total book loan percentage.

If we are to read the goals set up for the future by our party in automation, mechanization and chemicalization of production, etc., then the progress of science must become not only an affair of the pertinent sectors of social activity but also the object of interest and care of our entire population. We must overcome the tradition of onesided orientation toward the humanities within large groups of our -- namely the older -- intelligentsia, to remove the inequality in publicity given to artists as compared to that given to technologists, and to eliminate the leftover barriers and misunderstandings between technical and non-technical intelligentsia, etc. In this it is necessary to point out however, that we are not trying to propagate yet another onesided orientation, this time to science and technology: it is rather an effort to create by developing both provinces a correct relation between the orientation toward humanities and the orientation toward technology, between intellectual and emotional influence. This is also in harmony with the effort to increase the role of art in our society and to make art a life necessity of the people.

Of course, striving for the proper balance in the profile of educational work does not mean automatic acquisition of a true balance in general education. It is not enough to organize cultural activities. One must also get the people to participate. Recent studies of the Educational Institute in Prague show, in this respect, many disquieting phenomena pertaining primarily to the character of cultural life of certain groups of the working class. Contemplation of the causes of these deficiencies shows that from an objective point of view the core of the problem rests in the disharmony between work and cultural rhythms -- namely in the well known fact that the opening hours of cultural activities do not respect the divisions of working time. The consequences are so serious that a broader solution for this problem becomes extremely pressing. However, the unification of the economical character of the regions has created conditions which will lend to these solutions a largely regional character -- in respect to the production needs of the prevalent branches of industry.

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Changes affecting the arrangement of districts and communities have greater significance in the province of culture than those affecting the regions. To heighten the level of cultural direction at this time means above all a rise in the level of the directing mission of the districts. Thus, the valid slogan of our time reflecting the conclusions of the Congress of Socialistic Culture is: to build up districts as the main regulatory centers of culture.

In what sense? The answer is obvious from the delimitation of the scope and concept of the regulatory role of all the segments of cultural administration. Their common task is the realization of the cultural interests of our entire society. Each level of political

administration has its own place within this framework. This place is based on objective conditions and is defined primarily by the different distances from the working masses and from the national regulatory center.

Function of the central components, more concretely, of the Ministry of Education, is defined by the fact that it works under the immediate direction of the Central Committee of the party, that it surveys the basic problems of cultural life of the entire republic, and that it has relatively complete information on cultural development abroad; it is thus capable of accumulating a fullest range of experiences, of comparing the situation within all the regions, and of separating generally valid features of cultural development from those determined by the peculiarities of individual regions and districts etc. Because of this its basic tasks will include primarily the elaboration of the cultural policy of the party, the proposal of long range programs and plans, clarification of perspective developmental concepts, equalization of generic differences in the cultural development of the regions, publication of the best experiences, securing of cultural relations with foreign countries etc.

In the direction of culture, the regions have primarily a facilitating task; they take over a part of the clarification tasks of the central organization but at a different level. The core of their mission consists of harmonizing of the national policies with the needs of regional economical development; for instance, investment supported cultural buildup consisting primarily of planning a network of educational and artistic establishments in proportion to the perspectives of economical development, will belong among the many distinct tasks to be allotted to each region. In the same way, regions will be responsible for the planned liquidation of differences in the degree of cultural development of the individual districts and areas etc. Thus, at their own level, the regions insure the performance of a majority of the tasks performed by the central organizations on the national level.

Substantially different is the position of districts. They have less to say in the broader determination of general concepts (since the necessary prerequisite for that is a survey of the most extensive territorial connections), but have more to say -- in fact are exclusive -- in the correct transfer of directives and party policies into life. A district is the first segment of the governing system which is directly tied to the masses of workers in factories and villages. In the new conditions it is thus able to exercise a greater influence on centrally and regionally directed provinces. The slogan calling for the buildup of districts as governing centers is supported by many other important factors. Experience shows that our weakness did not and will not consist of wrongly or incorrectly stated cultural policy but rather of the fact that the right slogans were not pressed into life with sufficient vigor. The current extensive decentralization

emphasizes the development of districts in all of its consequences. In summary it is necessary to point out that the purpose of all the new administrative establishments is not to weaken but rather to strengthen the national point of view and to validate with greater strength the interests of our entire society.

The conditions of cultural direction differ in several respects in regions and districts. In contrast to the regions, the districts did not acquire economical delienation in the new territorial set up but only a slightly higher degree of economical and cultural unity. Quite enlightening is the comparison of the effect of the general increase of territorial circuits on regions and districts. While the number of districts under the jurisdiction of the new regional offices did not increase, the number of communities included in the territorial circuits of the new districts increased many times. While in the old organization a district encompassed about 55 communities on the average, under the new conditions, this number has increased to 135-137 communities; this average is slightly higher in the Bohemian regions than in Slovakia. The newness of the district position is emphasized also by a marked increase in the administrative powers of the local national councils, and from the long range view, by evolution toward gradual fusion of communities. These perspectives indicate that there will be a gradual growth of powerful social forces which will become the carriers of cultural development on a much greater scale, that the role of the party will be strengthened, that the circle of possibilities of cultural services will be expanded and that the opportunity for selection of functionaries will be improved. The predispositions for the building a materio-technical basis of cultural life will be improved namely because in the near future basic cultural and social centers of the club type will be built in larger communities and economically stronger JZD (Jednotne Zemedelske Druzstvo -- United Agricultural Cooperative). Speedup in the development of production powers and perfecting of production relationships in agriculture will undoubtedly be reflected in many other concrete expressions in the province of culture, and will serve in the struggle to overcome the cultural differences between cities and villages. At present, however, the main problem is the full and accelerated usage of the new administrative powers vested into the local governing bodies, so that the elementary deficiencies in cultural life and in orientation of educational work, will be removed without delay. We can no longer tolerate a situation characterized under recent conditions by the fact that on the average our farmer reads one single specialized publication in several years.

If we consider the sum of all these and of all the other circumstances now so newly created as well as all the future ones, it becomes obvious that in the interest of strengthening of the directing activities some of the current principles of cultural organization, cadre situation and work methods will have to be drastically changed.

In their unity they are supposed to secure the very reasons for the regional administrative changes in the province of culture: namely, deepening of socialistic democracy, better direction of culture, and in connection with this, also an increase in active cooperation of the workers in the process of cultural revolution. All this, however, presumes the expansion of current politico-cultural practice in two primary directions: 1) the deepening of the recognition side of the governing process, so that action of all the levels of the state organization would be based on complete and exact knowledge of reality, and 2) establishment of a more flexible executive branch of the government. To achieve this we must use the basic method of insuring still broader participation of the masses in deciding all the cultural affairs of society. After this, we must in the first place, expand all the methods and tendencies decided upon already before the new regional reorganization. There is a continued and heightened necessity to strengthen the role of elected bodies, to concentrate cultural forces in the sense of the party slogan concerning the unity of culturally-educational influence, to work in still closer connection with the party action committees, and to heighten the level of cultural planning practice. Another part of this complex consists of the fact that the new regional arrangement taken as a basis for the buildup of party, voluntary and state organizations, will bring about an increase in the membership basis of social organizations, and with this, also the possibility of increasing their influence on cultural existence. We can presume that in future development volunteer organizations will be purposely given new tasks and powers e.g. in administration and direction of certain cultural institutions etc. In this respect the communities will have an easier job in solving the current weighty problems of coordination, diffusion of cultural work, function hoarding, etc.

In these new conditions, the machinery of cultural direction will also discover imaginary as well as real conflicts which will have to be thoughtfully solved. We frequently hear discussions about the increased possibility of conflict between the need to facilitate the citizens' contact with the national councils and to expand district aid to communities, and the larger number of communities per district as well as the general increase in their distances from the administrative centers. This question is being solved primarily by decentralization of governing powers from districts to the communities and by a conscientious policy in regard to centers. Even at this time the idea of central communities is nothing new. However, it is necessary to emphasize that groups and central communities do not represent yet another level of government. Work with them must be considered rather as a method of contact with the active and as a method of planning of the investment supported cultural buildup.

On the other hand experience has shown that further progress cannot be accomplished merely by expansion of previously stated maxims

but rather that the current theorems must be enriched by qualitatively new elements. A demanding solution was found among the discussion stimuli of comrade Novotny. It consists of the proposal that some of the commissions of the national councils be given also a certain amount of freedom to make decisions. This would, in its consequences, mean also a new role for the permanent cultural and school commissions, and most probably, even further democratization of the state cultural inspection policy. The first proposal was defined in its basic form by an act of the UV KSC. In the second case, the new elements will consist of the fact that the direct power of state supervision will not be vested only in the members of the national councils but also in voluntary actives from the ranks of the citizens. Generally, we can say that the decisive valid rule is that in the work with the actives no matter in what form or connection, we must follow governmental procedures and methods beginning with the ministry and ending with the local national councils in the individual communities.

In judging and in thinking of the new methods of cultural direction we must not omit the connection with the previously mentioned development of educational activity and mainly with the reduction of the work day. Any possible confusion in the question of the realization of the new role of the permanent cultural and school commissions arises in the one sided reliance on experiences from current practice and in the lack of foresight into the future point of view.

It is understandable that under current conditions the members of these commissions were limited in their effort to penetrate deeply into the problems of cultural direction by lack of time even though they were given certain legal free time for this purpose. This was also responsible for the condition under which one member of the national council would at times be limited to whatever matter was submitted to him for evaluation and decision by the pertinent department of the cultural administration; the reviews of the permanent cultural and school commissions, while representing very deserving and valuable activity, could not be expanded in the scope necessitated by the situation. Our present day outlook is quite different. The shortening of the work day which will occur within the course of the third five year plan will amount approximately to a 9% reduction in the work time fund; this will free several categories of industrial employees, and following gradual mechanization and better organization of the agricultural effort, also many of our cooperative farmers. Functionaries of the national councils and volunteer organizations who work directly in the cultural sector, will be released for managerial tasks in the permanent school and cultural commissions on the basis of suitable temporary arrangements. The minor time losses thus occasionally incurred will be outweighed many times by the political consequences of fuller validation of the social function of culture. Besides, the future communistic self-government would be unthinkable without the type of man who will fill his life with productive labor,

with socially conditioned personal interests and fulfillment of public duties. At present, however, it will still be necessary in the interest of full development of voluntary creative cooperation of the workers in the direction of cultural affairs, that a high level performance be given by all the appointed, professional cultural workers, namely the politico-cultural workers of the national councils and administrative branches of volunteer organizations, and also by the various categories of political organizers and specialists within cultural and educational establishments. If the demands placed on the managerial activity of voluntary workers are rising, then this is doubly true also of the standard of performance of the permanent, paid functionaries within the cultural sector. The party is meeting these new needs by a series of important steps among which a prominent place belongs to the establishment of a special - college level - institute for the training of cultural and educational workers.

The process now in front of us contains one more question of special importance: namely, that the more governing powers are given to the districts and communities, the more necessary it will be to insure effectively the unity of cultural policy and to guard it from the inroads of sectarian interests. Every decentralizing step in the province of culture will have its natural balance and meaning in the strengthening of the centralization of interests. Since the KSC is the representative of the ideological unity of the people, the new situation, points out the need to strengthen its role of leadership. This is further projected into the necessity that the district and regional national councils work directly under the most immediate party supervision possible.

The buildup of districts as centers of government will be one of the most important tasks of cultural buildup in the year 1960, and it will be all the more difficult because there are no traditions to follow and no broad fund of experience to rely on. The first stages will undoubtedly consist of reclarification of the politico-social function of culture, of activation of the intellectual forces, and primarily, of exercising all the tact necessary in changing the current cultural organization. The network of current governing bodies and cultural establishments is closely united with the present day voluntary cultural actives, and it would be to no advantage, to affect the latter unfavorably.

Our times are, however, already gradually creating conditions favorable to successful solution of all these problems and to a swift increase in the importance of districts in cultural work. Educational institutions which at this time form the basis of the cultural network will soon be joined also by new artistic establishments e.g. people's schools of art, modeled on the present day music schools; several categories of art workers will find their existence and validation within this framework, presuming they will not only live in a district but also work there. We may also presume that in some areas the greater

scope of the districts and the resulting broader concentration of cultural forces will create conditions favorable to permanent usage of the existing theater buildings; this will be accomplished not just by visiting professional groups but also by establishment of district theaters of people's art, the artistic production of which would be easily insured by the forces of the best amateur companies. Vast new possibilities will be generally created for the development of the artistic creativity of the people. The tendency toward equalization of the cultural differences between the center and the marginal provinces is becoming stronger under the new order and will probably allow full expression of the abilities of the so called "hidden districts" sooner than is expected. In the areas where bourgeois administration provided the people with only minimum opportunity for cultural development the creative forces of the people will be especially expanded. The districts can expect a gradual influx of a large number of professional creative forces. However, this influx will not be accompanied by the outlived ideas of cultural missionary work still seen quite recently among certain groups of cultural workers. The new style of creative work will demand of the intellectuals also a new style of life which will lead them to the very centers of socialistic activity - to the districts and communities. Such is the logic of socialistic cultural development.

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