

The Place of Cultural Relations in International Life

Twenty years ago cultural relations did not loom large in Canada's foreign policy. Today the development of international cultural relations is an essential dimension of our diplomacy.

Since World War II many nations have expanded their international cultural relations, broadening the nature and improving the quality of their contacts with others, reaping the considerable benefits which can accrue from better understanding between peoples. The importance of such relations has been well recorded at many international conferences, including the Unesco conferences of Venice and Helsinki in 1970 and 1972 and the Helsinki Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe in 1976. Furthermore, the Declaration of the Principles of International Cultural Co-operation, adopted in November 1966 recognizes the contribution artistic, academic and scientific exchanges make to world understanding, peace and security.

Around the world, more and more countries have realized that cultural relations are an integral part of an imaginative foreign policy because they bring man and his world into harmony, serving national and international interests simultaneously. Inasmuch as foreign policy is an extension abroad of domestic interests, cultural relations with other countries not only enhance a country's presence in other parts of the world but serve domestic objectives as well.

Countries long conscious of the compatibility of cultural and foreign policy objectives, as well as of the benefits of cultural diplomacy, have evolved highly sophisticated policies, programs and personnel to take advantage of them. Moreover, they are constantly updating and upgrading their cultural activities to make them as attractive and competitive as possible on the international stage.

France, Great Britain and the Federal Republic of Germany are recognized masters in the arts of cultural diplomacy. France's long and distinguished promo-

tion of its language and civilization is a tradition. France devotes over 2 billion francs a year to international cultural relations and has at its command an extensive array of institutes, programs, and specialized personnel to attend to its interests abroad. Never prepared to rest on its laurels, France recently completed a massive review of its operations—the Rigaud review—which recommended an even greater overseas and domestic commitment as well as a substantial reorganization of its Directorate-General for Cultural, Scientific and Technical Relations. Likewise, Great Britain has had many years of experience. With a current budget of some 60 million pounds, the British Council is well-known throughout the world for the efficiency and effectiveness with which it promotes British science, education, the professions and the English language abroad. Like France, Great Britain also undertook a systematic review of its foreign cultural operations recently in order to determine how it could enhance its competitive position abroad. Finally, and also following a major review, the Federal Republic of Germany, in recognition of the pivotal importance of cultural relations, recently accorded them the same status as economic and political relations in its foreign policy. Not only does the Federal Republic allocate more than 400 million marks annually to its international cultural relations but, like France and Great Britain, it also possesses a vast network of institutes, centres, programs and personnel to advance its cause abroad.

Many other countries are making a substantial commitment to the development of cultural relations. Most conspicuous among these are the United States, Sweden, Japan, Israel, Egypt, Mexico, the U.S.S.R. and China. While the United States is a relative newcomer to the pursuit of cultural diplomacy at the governmental level, its enormous economic and political power throughout the world, coupled with the impact it has on world communications and the mass media,