

# Cultural policy in *Tunisia*

Rafik Saïd

Unesco

## **Studies and documents on cultural policies**

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# Preface

The publication of this series has been undertaken as part of the programme adopted by the General Conference of Unesco at its fifteenth session for the study of cultural policies.

In this context 'cultural policy' is taken to mean a body of operational principles, administrative and budgetary practices and procedures which provide a basis for cultural action by the State. Obviously, there cannot be *one* cultural policy suited to all countries; each Member State determines its own cultural policy according to the cultural values, aims and choices it sets for itself.

It has been largely recognized that there is a need for exchanges of information and experience between countries as well as for cross-national investigations on specific themes, research into concepts and methods, etc.

The aim of this series, therefore, is to contribute to the dissemination of information by presenting both the findings of such studies and various national surveys illustrating problems, experiments and achievements in individual countries chosen as representative of differing socio-economic systems, regional areas and levels of development. To achieve a measure of comparability, an attempt has been made to follow, as far as possible, a fairly similar pattern and method of approach.

This survey has been prepared for Unesco by Mr. Rafik Saïd, formerly Directeur de l'Animation Culturelle in Tunisia. The opinions expressed are the author's and do not necessarily reflect the views of Unesco.

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# Introduction

‘Cultivate your mind,  
from the cradle to the grave’  
MAHOMET

The noble precept of the Prophet which, like an inscription on a coin, introduces this booklet, bears witness to a generosity and a confidence in man which are the opposite of the intellectual malthusianism characterizing the advice given in ancient times by Antisthenes: ‘If one were wise one would avoid learning to read, in order not to be corrupted by others.’

Nevertheless it seems that it was the view of the cynic Antisthenes which was for long adopted by mankind, and it must be recognized that it is only in modern times that the acquisition of even the most elementary knowledge has been seen to be one of the primary functions of man in society.

Antisthenes’ view was adopted to the extent that for a long time culture was the preserve of those privileged by fortune; the common people were kept at a distance by the disdain of the cultured few, by a cautious distrust of developing a critical sense, and also by a logical feeling that culture was not useful. Knowledge was so abstract that its dissemination appeared to serve no direct purpose for society. Science had not yet penetrated the everyday life of man or taken the pragmatic form it has acquired today.

The people themselves were not attracted by a literary and academic education which in some cases was linked with learned forms of speech they did not understand, without any apparent connexion with the pressing cares of everyday life.

It must, however, in fairness be said that this systematically restrictive outlook was primarily caused by the introduction of Western civilization. The fact that Mahomet’s teaching in this regard remained largely a dead letter for the mass of the Moslem population was due chiefly to the constant history of dramatic vicissitudes suffered by peoples who were unable to find political awareness or equilibrium, and who endured a succession of conquests at different hands, and were subjected to an incessant stream of fresh influences of composite origin which prevented the creation of traditions—peoples whose personality was confused because they were involved in too many conflicting cultures. The case of Tunisia is a typical one.

But it is in the nature of ideas to be universal in their appeal, in the nature of science to step beyond the bounds of the laboratory and enrol in the service of mankind.

It is in the nature of peoples to make themselves masters of their fate, and their growing self-awareness quickens their feeling for values of which they have been deprived.

Although for centuries any attempts at the dissemination of culture have been made with the greatest reluctance, there is no State anywhere in the world today, whatever its political structure, which does not recognize its duty to affirm the right of the individual to acquire the knowledge accumulated by the human mind over the ages, the application of which constitutes a prime factor in modern prosperity. A large increase in the ranks of the educated produces, within a society, new types of synthesis which contribute toward raising what is known as the level of civilization.

This community objective does not exclude the aim of self-improvement for the individual. On the contrary, it is this aim which in modern times preceded the search for benefit to the community as a whole. Humanism was originally individualistic, before opening out to an awareness of the great themes binding humanity together. Moreover, the benefit rapidly becomes reciprocal. Culture transforms the mind which applies itself thereto, and necessarily forges a closer link between it and society. A new, richer awareness appears of the relationship between society and the citizen, and even the signs of opposition between the two will sometimes be helpful, to the extent that they hasten change.

That is why one of the characteristics of the present time is an express and universal desire that the largest possible number of people should accede to the most widely varying aspects of knowledge. Material gain adds its stimulus to disinterested intellectual aspiration and the desire to uphold the dignity of the mind. This is one of the basic concerns of the major international organizations, one of which indicates by its very name its preoccupation with education, science and culture.

Every nation bears witness to this determination in accordance with its history and national spirit, and also in accordance with its requirements for economic and social development and its financial possibilities.

While all cultural systems reflect the realities of a nation's current situation, they are also based on fixed traditions. For some nations it will be a question of developing and adapting an already existing culture; for others what will be needed is a new start, a complete building anew. Yet even in the latter case the joint achievements of a young nation are never entirely new: they are always the outcome of stifled aspirations driven underground by historical circumstances.

One of the advantages of national independence is precisely that it enables a people to choose from among modern trends what best links it with the origins of its own past.

It was incumbent on Tunisia as a modern independent State to include among the first tasks of liberation that of finally liberating the individual, by acquiring a cultural system which would both reflect contemporary ideals and guarantee national prosperity.

The success of such an undertaking, and especially its moral significance and ultimate effectiveness, can however only be fully appreciated in the context of the historical background.



# Tunisia, a land of culture

Tunisia belongs to the Mediterranean world, the cradle of the most glorious civilizations and the great monotheist religions.

Judaism, Christianity and Islam all mingled together in the Mediterranean countries, particularly in North Africa, Italy and Spain. Maimonides, the 'Jewish Plato', Ibn Rushd, or Averroës, and Saint Thomas Aquinas all borrowed the basis of their philosophy from the same source, Aristotelianism.

In the heart of the Mediterranean, Tunisia has been a cross-roads of civilizations—African, Asian (brought by the Phoenicians and by Judaism and Christianity from the East), Arabo-Iranian, Islamo-European (through Andalusia) and European, comprising Greek, Roman and French influences.

Thus a relatively limited territory saw a succession of superimposed and opposing customs and doctrines such as history and geography together rarely present. Even more curious, these phenomena did not take on the appearance of spent waves cast up on a long coveted shore, carried along in the wake of the ships or cavalry of a conquering soldier of fortune. For the most part they constituted the apogee of what they claimed to represent; not theirs the muted key of peripheral ventures. They played the leading role, gave the main impetus to outward-radiating movements and formed, here on African soil, centres from which their intellectual influence spread out towards both East and West.

The Phoenicians founded Carthage in the ninth century B.C., after three centuries during which they had dotted the coast with staging posts such as Utica, Leptis Magna, Leptis Minor and Hadrumetum.

Ancient Carthage represented the Phoenician genius at its height, but its expansion rapidly raised the question of supremacy in the Mediterranean. A duel to the death was inevitable between the Punic capital and Rome, leading to the destruction of Carthage seven centuries after its foundation.

Going back on its vow to reduce Carthage to ashes, Rome was moved by a great wave of enthusiasm for Africa to rebuild the town at the same time as the appearance of the Aeneid linked the far-off legend of Dido with historical reality.

Not long afterwards the Church of Africa was to be cited throughout Christendom

as an example of ardent faith and doctrinal acumen. At the same time it was here that heresies, especially Donatism, assumed their most extreme form.

Then, for more than a century, the Roman province of Africa became, with Genseric and his Vandals, the capital of Arianism. It is a fact which has not been sufficiently emphasized that Tunisia is the only part of Africa in which the Teutons settled, and where an Empire grew up with names sounding like a Wagnerian cycle: Hunneric, Gunthamund and Thrasamund, the farthest outspur of the Nordic Horsemen's invasion.

Under Byzantium, the great councils held in Constantinople were frequently assembled to decide on conflicting doctrines which had appeared in the diocese of Africa.

Finally, Okba Ibn Nafi founded the sublime city of Kairouan, 'Qairāwan, bulwark of Islam until the end of time . . . '.

Such is a bird's-eye view of some of the peaks in a landscape which is inescapably imbued with spirituality. Yet while throughout these succeeding periods fire and sword, and ideas also, took hold of this promontory of peoples and cultures, it remains none the less true, remarkable though it may seem, that the land itself, notwithstanding the transience of successive invaders, preserved and perpetuated each culture, each influence which other cultures, other influences had supposedly ousted.

If we clutch this guiding thread provided by the continuity of cultures, we come across so many lasting monuments standing out from the history of ancient Tunisia that we tend rather to forget the ruins.

Scipio's cry, *delenda est Carthago*, seemed to settle the fate of the town. The Carthage of the Phoenicians was utterly destroyed, its inhabitants scattered; legionaries and mercenaries moved in, and Latin was introduced. Yet 600 years later, when St. Augustine wished to address the peoples to whom he brought the gospel, he needed an interpreter to make himself understood. Most of them still spoke Punic, a language related to Hebrew and probably the source of the alphabet used by most modern languages.

In the temples, Juno became purely and simply an incarnation of Tanit, the female counterpart of Baal; and authoritative historians have affirmed that the survival of Punic culture, which was Semitic in origin, helped Islam to conquer North Africa. The tenacity of this culture in no way belies either Roman or Greek influence; the Greek language, which had spread over all the Mediterranean basin, was taught and spoken by a section of the population of Carthage. During this period there was the beginning of an attempt to spread culture among the people. It is necessary to call attention to it in passing, since the presence of a culture is not always automatically accompanied by an effort to educate the people; therein lies the eternal drama of Tunisia.

In the most humble African townships, schoolmasters and occasionally grammarians formed groups of pupils. In Carthage, rhetoric, law, philosophy, history and geometry were taught by famous teachers. A galaxy of African authors appeared: Fronto, Apollinaris, Aulus Gellius and, the most famous of all, Apuleius. The Roman province of Africa and Byzacium not only produced fine intellects themselves but

also provided a home for great men such as Marius, who, while a refugee from Italy, lived for some time on the island of Jerba.

There is surely no need to dwell at length on examples of artistic creation. The stones of famous monuments still standing in place appeal to our imagination even more than fragmentary texts. The same is true of the work of mosaicists such as that at Hadrumetum.

Rapidly other influences, religious ones, were grafted on to this culture, which with its tendency to the concrete, was entirely Roman. Just as the land of Tunisia had already absorbed a number of languages, so it was to become acquainted with all, or nearly all, the religions. Paganism was succeeded by what was a flourishing Judaism, judging from the diatribes of another Carthaginian author, the Christian Tertullian, who fulminated vigorously against it. Christianity found here an ideal breeding-ground: as noted above, the bishoprics of Hippo and Carthage were models of what the apostolate should be. The vigour of a dogma presupposes heresy. The doctrines of Montanus and Marcion, Manichaeism and Donatism flourished, and St. Augustine was to expend considerable energy on combating such distortions of his own teaching.

Then came the dreadful onslaught, the dark thundercloud of Vandalism, which swept from the shores of the Baltic to the Tyrrhenian coast. The barbarians invaded Gaul, crossed into Spain, bestrode the pillars of Hercules and reached Numidia. It seems that the only hope they ever left behind them, wherever they passed, was the fact that they did not settle. Yet when they penetrated into Tunisia this was not the case, and it was precisely in this land, which had already fallen heir to so much, that they came to stay. What a strange whim on the part of the victorious Teuton, exposed to the mirage seen by Ulysses and Aeneas! Through prosperous countrysides and delectable regions where he could have found all he wanted and there was none to say him nay, he had passed on. In Carthage he came to a halt, and better still, founded an empire. It might have been imagined that he would make a clean sweep of everything, and that languages, culture and temples would disappear from the memory of man. On the contrary, sky, earth and standing stones had a civilizing effect on the savage hordes, and the Carthaginian empire of Genseric was to be the match of many others. The basic elements remained entrenched. The administrative and legal structure of Rome was largely maintained; knowledge was not despised: the poet Dracontius, author of the *Laudes Dei*, who was much admired in the Middle Ages, the historian St. Victor de Vita and the bishop St. Fulgentius of Ruspe were all products of this empire. The Vandals did not speak Latin, but just as Punic survived the Roman occupation, so Latin survived the Vandals, providing us with further examples of coexisting and superimposed cultural elements. It is true that the Arianism of the conquerors tended to be intolerant towards orthodox Christianity, but it is a historical fact that the latter nevertheless survived this period and later flourished under the protection of Byzantium, which came in its turn to interweave all the refinement of the East, like a subtle yet powerful binding force, into the existing cultural pattern.

Man succeeds man, but the land retains its hold.

With the advent of Islam, we reach the era of Moslem Africa, Ifriqiya.

No longer are we dealing here with a conquest by adventurers, a prize won by the

fortunes of war, a commonplace search for a strategic position or a base instinct to pillage. The aim is not so much to found an empire as to ensure the triumph of a faith. And since religion governs customs and traditions, a whole new civilization appears.

This civilization was to give European minds a feeling for the East, to impart colour to ordinary speech, to sweep up imagination and science in a single mighty stream, and to breathe fresh life into fossilized ideas which the practical arts were powerless to revive. It was probably this civilization that conferred on Europe several inventions which appeared in the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth centuries without being attributed to any author, but whose origin is Arabic, such as the use of paper, the compass and gunpowder. And from the Arab school emerged one pope, Sylvester II. From this time on Moslem civilization was to become the mainstream of the country's cultural life.

There followed the golden age of the Aghlabids. Kairouan, where the oldest Korans in the world are preserved, became a centre of intense intellectual life; a variety of rites diversified and enriched Moslem thought; artists built and decorated mosques; and men of letters, heir to Hellenic traditions, found this part of Ifriquiya to be an ideal meeting-place for ancient and modern philosophies.

Political circumstances changed, but the land remained faithful to its unique destiny. The brilliant intellectual ferment under the Aghlabids continued under the Fatimites, producing men such as the Malikite jurisconsult Ibn Abi Zaïd and the learned doctor Sidi Mahrez Ibn Khalef, the patron of Tunis.

The fourteenth and fifteenth centuries saw a large increase in the number of poets, scholars and historians. Ez Zitouna, the ancient university of Tunis, was an active centre of intellectual life, where doctors and scholars gathered, such as for example Ibn Zaitun, Ibn Al Abhar, Ibn Al Gafsi, and outstanding jurists such as Ibn Arafa. There is no need to cite the universally admired Ibn Khaldun.

All this remains however within the stream of Moslem civilization. An all-powerful fate seems to have decided that the people of this wise but suffering land should be subject to constant intermingling.

The Spaniards arrived, bringing their contribution, but were rapidly rejected, since they apparently did not adapt to the spirit of the place, which never forgave them for the destruction of the library of Ez Zitouna.

After them came the Turks, a fresh European-Asian element, who left their imprint on the daily life of the people. With the end of the seventeenth century there came the influence of Europe proper, particularly France. Under the Husseinite dynasty this influence grew stronger and stronger—which brings us down to the present day.

The above introduction does not claim to constitute an outline of the cultural history of Tunisia. The aim has merely been to recall salient features in order to illustrate the extent to which philosophies and civilizations have met, intermingled and followed on each other, to show that the legendary land of oblivion has in fact forgotten nothing imprinted on its soil over the centuries. The Lybico-Punic mausoleum of Dougga, the remains of menhirs or dolmens and the great mosque of Okba Ibn Nafi recall a dozen different peoples, and at least as many languages or dialects,

some of which have existed for long periods side by side, countless heresies and sects, poets, jurists, saints, scholars, artists, builders. . . . We come to a stop, for otherwise one would always overlook some aspect of all this abundant wealth, perhaps even an entire civilization which has marked its passage in stone or on parchment. But for the too-frequent recourse to arms, one would be tempted to describe Tunisia as the source to which, above all others, the nations have looked for spiritual replenishment.

The conclusion seems inescapable. Surely a country so marked by fate must inevitably reach a sublime level of civilization? Surely it must rank among those in the cultural forefront of mankind? Surely the inhabitants of this now peaceful land, the heirs of so many varied races, must be among the best educated in the world? Such would indeed appear to be its historical destiny. But destiny is sometimes seen to give way before the evil spells cast by men; and Tunisia has gone through too many ordeals to be able to benefit to the maximum from all its preciously hoarded wealth.

# Tunisia, a land sorely tested

The strategic position of this land has been responsible, as is often the case, for both its good and its bad fortune. Its good fortune resides, as we have seen, in its being a land of culture. Its bad fortune lies in the fact that for centuries there was not a sufficiently large stable population nor a long enough period of peace to establish this culture amongst the people. Its bad fortune, in short, is that it has never had the leisure to find itself as a people and become a nation.

There are two different factors which determine whether a cultural system is of high quality or not. The first depends on there being the right environment, the second is a question of the political situation. Tunisia, as we have attempted to demonstrate, has been, in comparison with most countries, fortunate in having the right environment. But what it has lacked for such a long time is a favourable political situation in which to benefit from its good fortune. The setting up of such a system, in fact, requires a coherent organizational framework, specific laws and regulations, the creation of machinery, in a word an institutional structure which forms part of a comprehensive legislative or juridical system and is therefore subject to the political authority. In order to undertake a task of cultural education, what is needed is a stable political authority which knows what it wants and, above all, fully understands the nature of the task.

‘A people must first of all be a people before it can find its own specific genius.’ Thus has been expressed the mental impotence caused by subjugation. We would at this point have to recapitulate the history of Tunisia in an attempt to illustrate the long, abortive sequence of dynastic conflicts, palace rivalries, conquests and occupations.

Whereas in Europe, little by little, nations took shape, crystallized within set frontiers and with specific national characteristics, and set about developing their cultural and economic potential, it is enough to say that the opposite occurred in Tunisia, owing to the history and geography of the country. Being endowed with too many peoples, too many languages and too many different ways of thinking, Tunisia was overwhelmed by certain political factors which prevented it from finding itself rapidly. The Tunis itinerary was too widely known and Cape Bon, standing as it does at a mid-point between East and West, juts out too advantageously into that sea

over which the great imperialist powers have always sought to establish supremacy. Thus, that same phenomenon of successive invasions which helped to make the country an undoubted treasure-house of cultural wealth was also responsible for sapping the strength of the people. There was never a sufficiently stable or untroubled political régime to undertake the task of cultural education.

In the nineteenth century, in fact, only European schools, about twenty, existed in Tunisia; these were run by religious orders. On the national plane the only form of education was the traditional one given in the great Zitouna mosque and in the Kouttabs. These were Koranic schools with single classes which generally came under a *moueddeb* who did not always have the most useful qualifications and who taught children of all ages reading and writing. This education was above all a religious one based upon commentaries on the Koran and the Sunna.<sup>1</sup> There was no form of modern education.

In 1875 the minister Khéredine founded the Sadiki college, which was the first large educational establishment; its purpose was to train young Tunisians for professional and administrative careers according to modern ideas. Judged too subservient to the interests of Turkey, however, he was forced to resign.

These signs would appear to point to the beginning of national consciousness and everything would tend to indicate that this phenomenon was going to speed up. At the same moment, indeed, all mankind was joining in the pursuit of knowledge. Scientific discoveries lost their speculative nature and, in a succession of spectacular applications, were placed at the service of man, upsetting industrial techniques and modifying everyday life. By the mere fact that he took part in the life of his age, man was led to instruct himself, then to cultivate himself in order to understand, and to understand in order to keep up with the new rhythm of existence. Above all, the ruling classes themselves became conscious of the necessity of educating the masses since the masses were called upon to produce wealth.

As was to be expected, the consequences of this beneficial phenomenon were keenly felt by Tunisia. It could not help but associate itself with it, especially as an idea of large and generous scope was gaining ascendancy in the world at the time and was even upheld by kings. This idea was 'the right of peoples to self-determination', and it resulted in the formation of numerous nation-states.

Unfortunately, however, an opposing movement, originating essentially in the European countries and caused by the sudden expansion of industrialism, was to stifle the nascent desires of Tunisians for a national consciousness and an autonomous cultural development. This movement, which was also a typical feature of the late nineteenth century and which was to catch up Tunisia in its bustling frenzy, was none other than colonialism. And the specific form colonialism was to take in Tunisia was that of the French protectorate.

On the eve of the protectorate Tunisia seemed set to exploit the cultural wealth of its complex past. Hassin Khoja, El Ouzir Serraj, and Ibn Ali Dinar in the eighteenth century and Mohamed Ben Othman, Es-Senoussi and Ben Dhiaf in the nineteenth

1. Precepts drawn from the life of the Prophet and the four orthodox Caliphs.

were eminent historians. Ben Dhiyf had just written a history of Tunisia. Sheik Mohamed Senoussi's anthology revealed the variety and the vigour of Arabic poetry. By 1860 an official printing establishment was publishing both old and new literary works and the Tunis library, which was the richest in all North Africa, was a fund of knowledge ready to be widely used. Young people, filled with enthusiasm, showed obvious signs of wanting to undertake serious study, thus bearing witness to the vitality of the people.

Numerous signs point to the fact that new forms of expression were burgeoning in the arts. If political life had continued normally, this might have resulted in a homogeneous national culture at last being formed, and widespread education would have progressively helped to extend this culture to an incalculable degree. But this was not exactly the aim of colonialism.

It would, of course, be absurd to claim that France made no contribution to Tunisia. It would indeed be a strange paradox if this country of high intellectual qualities had not made its imprint on Tunisian soil, which already bore the mark of so many less sophisticated civilizations.

The French spirit, by directly influencing, left a new stamp on a receptive population. To a certain extent it enriched Tunisian thought; it did this even, and perhaps especially, through the very antagonisms which it aroused. It made it even more nimble than it was and revealed new horizons to it by introducing a modernism of genuine quality. In this sense, it would be out of place to carp about a cultural asset best testified to by the retention of the French language. But unfortunately the French presence did not mean simply the genius of France. It also meant an army, an administration, a political system and above all an imperialist outlook.

Held back in this manner by the governing régime, Tunisia, once it was free of it, that is to say immediately after its independence in 1956, placed the problem of education in the forefront of its preoccupations.

As President Bourguiba was to say in 1958: 'When we were in the opposition, outside the mainstream of civic life and harassing the Protectorate to obtain the recognition of our rights, I vowed that if ever we took over the apparatus of the State, the very first problem we would deal with would be that of education.'

Educational reform was instigated in 1958; its aim was to provide the country with an educational system corresponding 'to its genius, its cultural tradition and contemporary ideals', and it set itself the task of (a) unifying an educational system of which the salient feature was its diversity; (b) 'renationalizing' education by basing it upon the realities of national life and by allowing Arabic to resume its rightful place as the national language; and (c) extending schooling both horizontally and vertically.

The task of the Department of Education was therefore immense and there was a danger that it would give priority to strictly educational problems at the expense of cultural problems.

This was one of the main reasons which led the Tunisian Government to set up in 1961 a special department for culture and information. The second reason, which was no less important, was the increasingly obvious fact that school no longer constitutes the only instrument of culture.



If this can be seen to be true in Europe today, it is none the less true, though in a rather different way, for the developing countries. In these countries the social and cultural level of the vast majority deprives more often than not both the child and the adult of the possibilities available to most Europeans within the context of the family. Because of this it is more necessary than ever that structures be set up which enable all the population to supplement, or even make up for, the training given in school.<sup>1</sup>

Finally, the third reason is that the State has a certain responsibility towards the nation as far as cultural matters are concerned. It must define a cultural policy, fit it into its over-all planning and see to it that culture is accessible to the largest possible sector of the population, that it forms a harmonious complement to educational programmes and aids both economic and social development, lastly that it reflects the nation's soul whilst being wide open to world culture. Only an independent department, having the necessary political and moral authority, could carry out this task successfully.

1. See the special issue of the journal of the Institut des Belles-Lettres Arabes concerning this question: *IBLA* (Tunis), No. 105, January-March 1964.

# The administrative structures

The functions of the Office of the State Secretary for Culture and Information were laid down as follows by a decree dated 11 December 1961:

*Article 1.* The State Secretary for Culture and Information shall exercise the functions previously devolving on the State Secretary for Information in matters relating to press, radio, television and cinema.

*Article 2.* In addition to the powers referred to in Article 1, the State Secretary for Culture and Information shall be responsible for promoting and co-ordinating cultural activities by drawing up and putting into effect a programme for the development and dissemination of culture throughout the nation.

To this end, he shall be responsible, in particular, for:

1. Facilitating access to the cultural heritage of the nation.
2. Fundamental and popular education in all its forms.
3. The running of public libraries and museums and the preservation of historic sites and monuments.
4. Cultural relations with foreign countries and, in particular, with international organizations involved, in no matter what capacity, with culture.
5. Promoting by appropriate means artistic, literary and theatrical activities.
6. Supervising, within the limits laid down by the laws and regulations, private organizations or institutions concerned with promoting or disseminating artistic or intellectual work.

It is to be noted that the Tunisian Government, firmly resolved to promote cultural life in the country, has spared no expense in seeking to attain these ends and has carried out a large-scale reorganization in the cultural field: by setting up a special ministry for culture;<sup>1</sup> by giving this ministry the technical resources necessary for a major programme covering press, radio, television and cinema; and by causing cultural matters which were previously spread over several departments to be brought within the jurisdiction of a single ministry, thus ensuring better co-ordination.

1. This paper was written in August 1969. In November 1969 a Ministry of Culture was set up, a State Secretary in the Prime Minister's Office being made responsible for the Department of Information.

The Office of the State Secretary for Culture and Information has two budgets: (a) an operating budget (section I) which is renewed every year; and (b) a capital investment budget (section II) based on the development plans (three-year plan, 1962-64; four-year plan, 1965-68; four-year plan, 1969-72).

There are also a number of subsidiary organizations. These have their own budget, which has to be approved by the department under which they come.

As a rule these organizations are financially independent with the exception of the following two institutions: the National Institute of Archaeology and the Arts, and the Adult Education Institute.

As the income of these two institutions is not sufficient to cover costs, their budget is balanced with the help of subsidies from the department under which they come (Office of the State Secretary for Youth and Social Affairs and that for Culture and Information).

Local authorities (municipalities and *gouvernorat* councils) contribute, in a proportion which varies depending on the size of their budget, to the cost of constructing and operating cultural centres, community centres and adults' and children's libraries.

The Office of the State Secretary for Culture and Information comprises two departments, one of which is for culture and the other for information.

The Department of Culture is made up of several divisions or services, and is also responsible for a number of subordinate cultural organizations.

### **National Institute of Archaeology and the Arts**

The National Institute of Archaeology and the Arts, which was set up by decree in 1957, is a public institution enjoying legal status and financially independent. It comes under the Office of the State Secretary for Culture and Information.

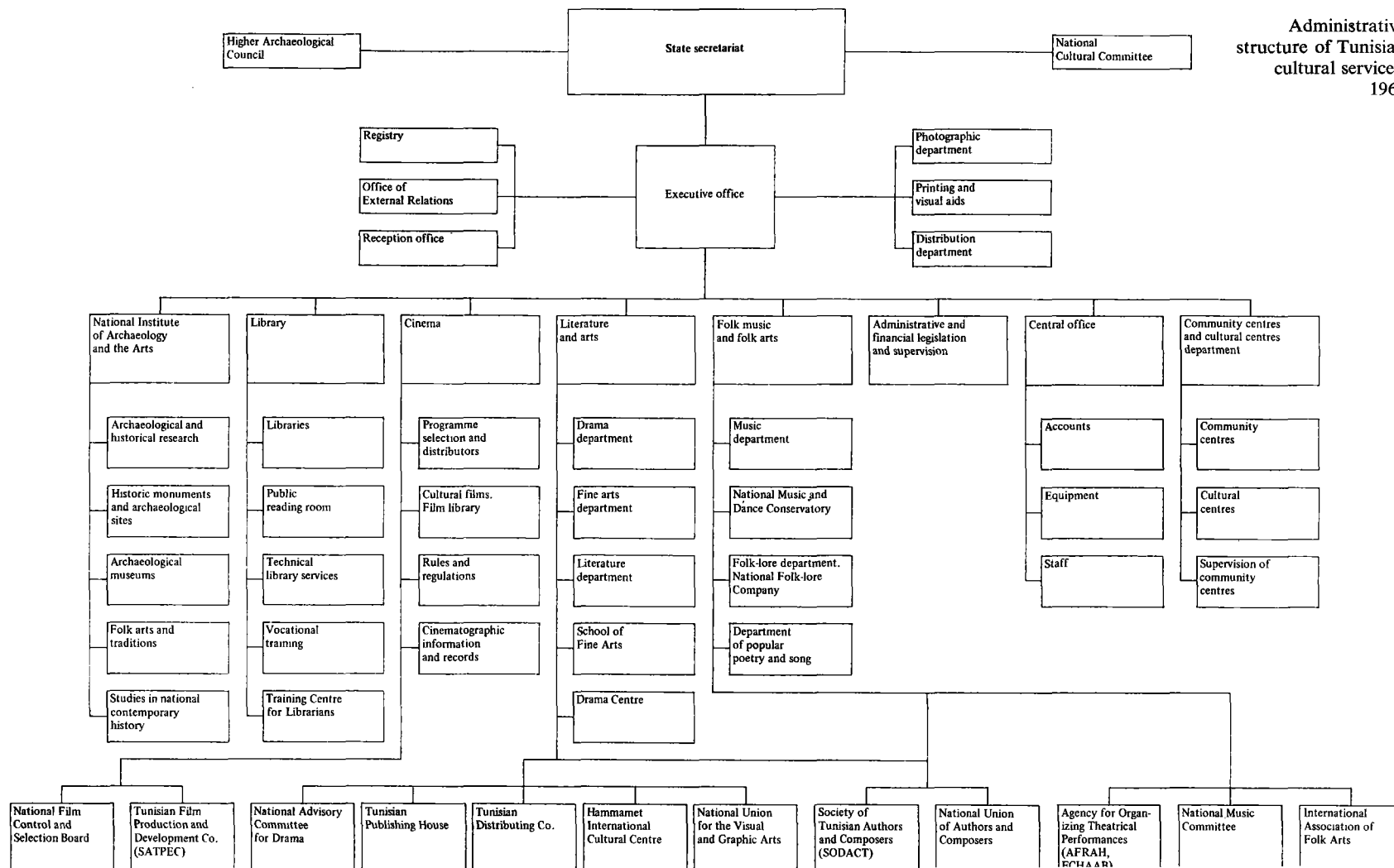
It is responsible, in particular, for: organizing and promoting archaeological and historical research; protecting and facilitating access to the national archaeological and historical heritage; inventorying, studying, preserving and facilitating access to the national museum heritage; collecting, collating, studying and promoting knowledge of folk arts and traditions.

The Institute is made up of five sections: the Archaeological and Historical Research Centre; the Division of Historic Monuments and Archaeological Sites; the Division of Archaeological and Historical Museums; the Folk Arts and Traditions Centre; the Centre for Studies in Contemporary National History.

The Archaeological and Historical Research Centre is responsible for: developing, directing and co-ordinating archaeological and historical research, in particular by the bringing to light of archaeological remains, the identification and archaeological and historical study of excavated objects before they are transferred to the department responsible for conservation; ensuring the publication of reports on archaeological and historical activities; and ensuring the regular publication of a periodical devoted to studies, notes and documents relating to archaeological and historical research.

The Division of Historic Monuments and Archaeological Sites is responsible for: (a) listing and classifying the monuments and sites studied; (b) facilitating access to

Administrative  
structure of Tunisian  
cultural services,  
1969



monuments and sites and making any improvements of a practical or scientific nature that may be deemed advisable; (c) taking all steps necessary for the preservation of historic monuments, e.g. maintenance, upkeep, restoration, protection, etc.; (d) seeing to the technical supervision of work carried out, with its agreement, upon the said monuments and sites; (e) ensuring that the laws and regulations relating to the preservation of monuments and sites are applied; (f) participating in the work of the Civic Buildings Commission and of any other existing or future organization, whether official or private, whose activity touches upon historic monuments or archaeological sites; and (g) ensuring the protection of groups of buildings declared to be of historic interest.

The Division of Archaeological and Historical Museums has under it all archaeological and historical museums, whether national, regional or local. It is responsible for the preservation, inventorying, study and exploitation of the national archaeological and historical museum heritage using whatever measures are necessary, in particular: (a) by setting up regional and local museums, where appropriate in collaboration with the Folk Arts and Traditions Centre and the communities concerned; (b) by fitting out and enlarging the existing archaeological museums and the archaeological sections of general museums; (c) by employing the most suitable scientific techniques for the preservation of the relics that have been placed in its care; (d) by a mass education campaign, involving placing the archaeological and historical heritage within the reach of the largest possible public by means of organized visits, lectures, booklets, catalogues, photographs or casts; and (e) by facilitating and encouraging the work of researchers whether or not they belong to the museum staff.

The Folk Arts and Traditions Centre has, in regard to museums of folk arts and traditions, the same functions as the Division of Archaeological and Historical Museums.

An archaeological council has been set up which is presided over by the State Secretary for Culture or by his representative. This comprises: the director of the National Institute of Archeology and the Arts, who acts as general secretary of the council; the directors of the four sections of the institute, who act as *rapporteurs* in regard to their sections; a representative of the State Secretary in the President's Office; a representative of the State Secretary for the Interior; a representative of the State Secretary for Education (University of Tunis); and a representative of the Commissioner-General for Tourism and Spas.

The Archaeological Council meets at least once a year. It examines the annual report of the National Institute of Archeology and the Arts, and expresses its opinion on the organization of the sections and the way in which their activities are being pursued; determines the institute's budget and approves whatever modifications may be deemed necessary in the course of the financial year; puts forward recommendations with a view to establishing joint programmes for deriving the maximum over-all benefit from the national archaeological and historical heritage; and is empowered to accept or reject gifts and bequests as long as these are not subject to any conditions or encumbrances and will not be contested by family interests. In all other cases, gifts and bequests can only be accepted by decree.

Each section of the institute has at its service a special commission which is presided over by the State Secretary or his representative and which includes the director of the institute, the director of the section concerned, and representatives appointed by the State Secretary for Culture from each study group attached to the section.

Each special commission meets at least three times a year. It examines problems of a general nature affecting the section concerned; voices its opinion concerning the appointment of the director of the section and the recruitment, professional status and promotion of the scientific staff; and reports to the Archaeological Council, through the director of the section, as *rapporteur*, on the work accomplished, the budget proposals and the programme for the coming year.

The operating expenses of the institute are covered by an annual subsidy (to balance the budget) plus the receipts of the institute. These consist of: (a) admission and visiting charges for archaeological museums and sites, fixed jointly by the State Secretary for Planning and the Economy and the State Secretary for Culture; (b) revenue from the sale of publications and surplus articles; and (c) receipts from gifts and bequests.

### **Division of Literature and the Arts**

The functions of the Division of Literature and the Arts in regard to the theatre, fine arts, literature, and publishing and book distribution are as follows.

#### *Theatre*

To promote the national theatre: by encouraging play-writing, theatre production and acting; by organizing training courses for actors both at the Drama Centre and in theatrical companies; by supervising theatrical activities in schools and universities; by encouraging amateur and professional theatrical companies to aim at ever-higher artistic standards and more streamlined organization; by organizing the acting profession and related trades in such a way as to foster budding talent and to encourage the formation of theatrical groups consisting of actors with a feeling for their public, devoting their lives to their art; and by arranging for theatrical productions to be put on throughout the country and generally supervising all theatrical activity.

To promote cultural exchanges in this field: by co-ordinating all inquiries made abroad with a view to selecting theatrical presentations which it might be of interest to bring to Tunisia; by encouraging actors and theatrical companies to tour abroad and arranging for Tunisian theatre groups to take part in international festivals; and by maintaining a connexion with academies of dramatic art abroad, the International Theatre Institute and Unesco.

### *Fine arts*

To promote the visual arts: by encouraging artistic creation and the greatest possible diversity of modes of expression, particularly amongst young people; by developing the most efficient system for an increasingly wide dissemination of Tunisian and foreign works of art and for making them accessible to all layers of the population; by taking measures to train a public which will be receptive to the expressive techniques used in modern art by means of a variety of adult-education techniques, which will also encourage those who have a bent to become art critics; by supervising the running of art galleries and the organization of exhibitions of all the visual arts; by seeing that all works of art sold are properly registered; and by maintaining supervision over colleges of fine arts (School of Fine Arts, School of Applied Arts, etc.).

To encourage cultural exchanges in the fine arts: by forming links with art academies abroad; by exchanging documents and information with academies and institutes of fine arts and applied arts; by arranging exchanges of artists and exhibitions; and by maintaining a connexion with the International Association of Art and any other organization with similar aims.

### *Literature*

To promote national literature: by encouraging all forms of literary creation; by giving young literary talent a chance to develop; by ensuring an increasingly wide dissemination of Tunisian literature amongst increasingly large sections of the population; by promoting a love of reading Tunisian literature by increasing the number of reading societies and literary discussions, organizing cultural information services, providing encouragement for those who have a bent for literary criticism, etc.; by ensuring the protection of copyright through the Society of Tunisian Authors and Composers; and by ensuring the smooth running of the National Authors and Composers' Union.

To foster knowledge of foreign literature: by encouraging exchange visits with foreign countries; by arranging for Tunisians to take part in international meetings; by organizing international meetings in Tunisia itself; by promoting the translation of the great works of world literature into the Arabic language and the translation of contemporary Tunisian writing into the most widely used foreign languages; and by organizing regular contacts with the main literary societies with a view to exchanging information and experience.

### *Publishing and book distribution*

To promote the publication of Tunisian writing (original works and translations): by organizing literary events and study seminars; by introducing the public to works of lasting value; and by encouraging literary, scientific and artistic creation.

To ensure an increasingly wide distribution of Tunisian books both within Tunisia and abroad.

To ensure that the recommendations of the publishing board are carried out by Tunisian publishers and, in particular, by the national Tunisian publishing house.

To examine, with the Tunisian distributors, the best ways of promoting the importation of good books and of drawing the public's attention to the most representative foreign books of our time.

### **Adult Education Institute**

First put in hand after independence, activities in the field of adult education passed through a series of experimental stages devoted to the development of a rational policy based on established facts and closely linked with economic and cultural development prospects.

The Destour Socialist Party, followed by the Office of the State Secretary for Education and that for Culture and Information, took action in this regard culminating in the establishment, in 1965, of the Adult Education Institute, which was given the task of elaborating, carrying out, evaluating and adapting a vast literacy and popular education programme aimed at developing the potentialities of the average citizen and better equipping him to play an effective part in social and economic development.

The institute, a financially autonomous body enjoying legal status, first placed under the Office of the State Secretary for Culture and later, in 1968, under that for Youth, Sport and Social Welfare, devoted a whole year to drawing up a fifteen-year plan for the eradication of illiteracy, establishing national, regional and local councils, training the professional staff required, preparing teaching material, drawing up curricula and undertaking preliminary studies.

At the same time, a month after the World Conference of Ministers of Education on the Eradication of Illiteracy, held at Teheran in September 1965, the Tunisian Government, anxious to implement the recommendations of the conference, organized for the Maghreb countries a symposium on adult education (16 to 23 October 1965), which was attended by foreign experts and a representative of Unesco as well as participants from the four countries concerned. This meeting gave considerable impetus to the struggle against illiteracy.

### *The national literacy plan*

The census taken in 1966 showed a total population of 4,533,351 persons of whom 1,214,688 were women. The gainfully employed population from 15 to 45 years of age, who are regarded as the country's productive element, amounted to 1,056,700 including 623,453 women. The literacy plan is intended for that sector of the population.

As a first step, the Adult Education Institute drew up a five-year plan (1966/71) to provide literacy training for the 150,000 illiterate workers in the productive sectors



(co-operative and agricultural enterprises, factories, mines, large national undertakings), in craft centres, in voluntary services, the army and prisons and for young girls in rural areas. The following progression is planned:

Preliminary stage: October 1966/67, 10,000 men and women students; October 1967/68, 20,000; October 1968/69, 30,000; October 1969/70, 40,000; October 1970/71, 50,000.

End of plan (total): 150,000.

### *The teaching programme*

The programme includes, apart from reading, writing and arithmetic, specially adapted lessons in geography, history and civic and religious instruction. Complementary vocational training or domestic science courses are also provided for men and women students according to their needs and possibilities.

The length of the main courses is two years; they are organized on the basis of five ninety-minute periods a day (450 hours), at the end of which successful candidates are awarded a first- or second-class Certificate of Social Education which is of a standard comparable with that of the fifth year of primary schooling in Arabic.

A third-year bilingual course was initiated in 1968 for those wishing to continue their studies (1,090 students in 1968/69), and a fourth-year course will be started in 1969 in response to the many requests submitted. This will be one of the elements of the future People's University, the creation of which has been the object of many recommendations and will provide the framework for further education in our country.

Examinations are held once a term to evaluate the progress made. Special coaching is provided during the summer vacation for students who failed the examination at the end of the school year to prepare them to resit the examination in October.

The educational premises and equipment are provided by the undertaking concerned or the local committee.

The teaching material—programmes, notes, textbooks—is supplied by the Adult Education Institute.

The teachers are required to follow training and refresher courses at the National Centre for the Training of Literacy Teachers near Tunis. They fall into four categories and their numbers have increased as shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1

	1966/67	1967/68	1968/69
Full-time teachers from the institute	216	304	335
Part-time teachers from the Ministry of Education	99	217	276
Part-time teachers from the different sectors	82	186	267
Teachers seconded from the army	57	75	107
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>454</b>	<b>782</b>	<b>985</b>

The full-time teachers are recruited from among holders of the *baccalauréat* or the *tahcil*.<sup>1</sup> They are trained and paid by the Adult Education Institute and work a thirty-hour week. Each one is responsible for four groups of twenty to twenty-five students.

Each teacher from the Ministry of Education devotes seven thirty-minute periods a week after his usual working hours to teaching a single group of students. The Adult Education Institute pays for this.

Teachers from the different sectors are selected from the staff of the undertaking concerned and paid by it, each one usually being responsible for a single group of students. They are required to attend the courses organized by the Adult Education Institute.

The same arrangement applies to those recruited from the army, rehabilitation centres and prisons. It may be noted that six blind teachers provide classes of blind illiterates with special tuition according to the Braille system.

### *Motivation and encouragement*

After the results of the final examination have been announced, ceremonies marking the end of the school year are held in the centres, administrative districts (*délégations*) and *gouvernorats*. During these ceremonies, which are presided by important personalities, successful candidates are presented with prizes of various sorts, in cash or in kind. Some undertakings also grant bonuses or promotion to their workers.

It is worthy of note that nearly all the co-operative groups which were awarded prizes in January 1969 by the Union Nationale de la Coopération as particularly successful in their field of activity organize literacy training for their members.

### *Results*

Table 2 shows attendance and pass figures for the Certificate of Social Education for the first two years, as well as the results of the spring term's examination held in March 1969.

TABLE 2

Students	1966/67	1967/68	1968/69	Total
Enrolled	16 156	32 595	42 890	91 641
Candidates	13 470	27 968	36 525	77 963
Participants	12 087	24 574	29 263	65 924
Passes	5 945	16 164	19 081	41 190

1. Tunisian diploma awarded on successful completion of traditional secondary-school education.

### *Educational television*

Since January 1968 a programme of literacy teaching, including reading, writing, arithmetic, history, geography, and civic and religious instruction, has been broadcast by television and radio, in co-operation with the broadcasting authorities, at the rate of two thirty-minute periods a week. The number of students following these courses has risen from 700 in 1968 to 3,688 in 1969. The students may be divided into the following three categories: (a) 1,803 men and 248 women students in 86 organized centres run by specially trained teachers who direct the students' work before and after the broadcasts; (b) a variety of students in 26 centres partly run by volunteers in party headquarters, communal centres, women's centres or youth centres; and (c) students working on their own, in 155 of the families covered.

Parallel activities without the use of television are carried out in an experimental centre and several other centres. Accompanying material (notes, primers for reading, writing and arithmetic, etc.) is provided to assist teachers and students in deriving maximum benefit from the courses.

Research specialists from the Adult Education Institute and other competent bodies are following the course of the experiment closely and assessing the progress made at each step.

Out of the 700 students enrolled in 1968, 538 took the final examination and 378 obtained the Certificate of Social Education.

Out of the 3,688 students enrolled in 1969, 2,312 took the examination in March and 1,880 passed it.

### *Cultural activities*

These occupy a very important place in the work of the literacy centres. They are extremely varied in scope, their purpose being to enable students to consolidate and increase their general knowledge and provide a wide range of further education: lectures and discussions ('teach-ins') on news items of direct interest to the locality; projection of educational films and filmstrips likely to appeal to the audience; dramatic productions of an instructive nature in the spoken language on subjects of current interest; excursions in the region, in other *gouvernorats* and abroad—some of the latter were even made by air, thanks to the offer of free tickets to the most deserving students; clubs for adults, hostels and holiday camps receive a constant stream of student groups; 'Civic Education Weeks' are organized monthly in rural districts, with the participation of all supervisory staff and instructors in the district; most centres provide supplementary training—agricultural, home industries, domestic, vocational, etc.—according to local needs.

### *Audio-visual material*

This type of material, supplied by or through the Adult Education Institute, is widely used in the centres. The main activities are the following: publication of a monthly

journal *Iqra*, specially designed for the students (25,000 copies); publication of a quarterly review for teachers and several regional reviews; production of several copies of twenty-five filmstrips; printing of reading primers, geography and educational television textbooks and fifteen revision manuals; organization of several fixed or travelling exhibitions on literacy; production of four short films on functional literacy work; distribution of television sets, projectors, tape-recorders, etc., to most of the centres; reproduction of documents of all sorts in a modern photographic laboratory; broadcasting of a daily educational programme and a thirty-minute weekly programme to students by radio; production of posters, tracts and slogans by the thousand on certain occasions.

#### *National and regional structures of the Adult Education Institute*

1. The National Council, comprising representatives of all governmental departments and national organizations (Party, Women's Union, Workers' Union, co-operative and youth organizations).
2. The Central Administration of the Adult Education Institute, made up of the departments of education, study and research, training, cultural promotion and educational television.
3. The regional councils in the thirteen *gouvernorats*, set up on the same lines as the National Council. Within these councils, an inspector, a regional commissioner and instructors designated by the institute are responsible for implementing the programmes drawn up.
4. The local councils of the 120 administrative districts assume the same responsibilities in their sectors.
5. The committees of the centres are responsible for the effective management of classes in their undertakings or villages.

#### *Study and research*

A large number of sociologists and research workers from the institute and from specialized institutions have carried out studies and research on a variety of different subjects since the literacy campaign was launched; some of them have published the results of their work.

The University of Tunis, in particular, is closely associated with the study and research undertaken to evaluate and supervise the development of the literacy campaign.

#### *International co-operation*

Since the institute was set up, there has been a marked increase in the exchange of information and delegations and in the number of visits by foreign and international experts. A similar increase has been noted in the number of foreign literacy workers attending courses in Tunisia, and Tunisians attending similar courses abroad.

Tunisia's activities in literacy are very closely followed by several foreign and international institutions.

A number of literacy experts and holders of Unesco fellowships have been sent to Tunisia to visit the country or to attend courses of varying duration.

A study of the value of cards and posters in functional literacy work was undertaken within the framework of a micro-experiment, carried out in co-operation with Unesco, in an agricultural co-operative in the Mornag. A short film was prepared on the various stages of this experiment.

A larger programme for 45,000 agricultural workers in the Béja region is under study; it may be partly financed by the United Nations Special Fund.

The fourth session of the Higher National Council for Literacy in Arab States was held at Tunis in February 1968. Eight Arab literacy workers took part in a six-month course in Tunisia.

Five delegations of teachers and students have visited Algeria, France, Italy, Libya and Yugoslavia.

### *Conferences and seminars*

A conference of responsible officials, department heads, inspectors and regional commissioners is held once a month to check progress in literacy teaching and discuss any problems raised.

The regional inspectors also organize conferences for teachers at monthly intervals.

The regional and local councils periodically organize seminars for the responsible authorities of the undertakings and organizations concerned, so as to study problems raised in regard to the centres, determine programmes, select the prizes awarded to encourage students, etc.

The regional conferences lead up to a National Conference of Social Education Staff held annually in conjunction with International Literacy Day.

This conference reviews the progress made, considers the different aspects of the literacy campaign, draws up a series of recommendations in the light of the results noted and problems met with and decides on the future orientation of the literacy programme.

It may be said that the results which the Adult Education Institute has obtained in less than three years have been more than encouraging; the institute's success in harnessing the country's active forces in furtherance of the literacy programme and the number of Tunisian nationals to have taken advantage of a varied training enabling them to play a more effective part among the productive elements of the nation have, in fact, both exceeded expectations.

On the occasion of the third International Literacy Day, on 8 September 1969, the international jury for the Mohammad Reza Pahlavi Prize awarded the Adult Education Institute an honourable mention for its 'decisive contribution to the launching and implementation of a national adult literacy programme, including the establishment, testing and application of an efficient methodology of adult literacy teaching and training'.

# The formulation of a long-term cultural policy

When the four-year plan for 1965-68 was drawn up, sector committees were established, one of which was the Committee on Culture and Human Advancement. The committee was placed under the chairmanship of the State Secretary for Culture and Information. Its five sub-committees are responsible, respectively, for libraries, the fine arts, the cinema, archaeology, cultural centres and community centres.

The committees first carried out regional studies covering the thirteen *gouvernorats* with a view to determining, for each *gouvernorat*, a number of areas suitable for integrated development.

Then the regional and local committees took over and addressed themselves to the task of drawing up the plan at a regional level. Separate reports on their work were prepared for each sector and communicated to the sector committees.

These, in conclusion, drew up the over-all plan by collating, and smoothing out differences between, the materials submitted by the committees for the various sectors.

The concept of regional development, which is a quite recent innovation in economic theory, first made its appearance in Tunisia in 1961, in conjunction with the idea of planning. It reflects the concern of the development authorities to introduce a geographical element into their thinking and forecasting and to right the balance between developing areas and depressed areas.

Further, the fact that sector activities under the development plan have been decentralized and placed on a regional footing brings them home with greater immediacy to the local populations, which feel a sense of involvement in concrete problems that they can discuss and take up with the people at the top.

Regional development is seen as having a part to play, both regionally and at the centre, in drawing up the plan.

## At the regional level

The local and regional planning committees consider the aims of the four-year plan, and the sector activities to be carried out under it, in order to allot priorities and determine the level of capital expenditure needed over the four-year period.

### **At the central level**

The reports of the regional committees are collated, broken down by sectors and sent to the special sector committees. These committees examine the proposals in regard to their quantitative aspects (over-all capital expenditure, number of schools, welfare centres, cultural centres, libraries, etc.) and from an over-all point of view, so as to ensure that they tally with their own figures.

Once this has been done, the sector committees send the control commission in charge of regional development their final proposals. The control commission has to check whether the combined proposals of the *gouvernorats* tally in all points with the total figures approved by the sector committees.

Should there be a discrepancy in regard to the figures for a given sector or branch, arbitration becomes necessary. Thus, for example, adjustments may have to be made as between regions so as not to exceed the total cultural expenditure estimates of the sector committees, i.e. so as to cut cultural investment in *gouvernorats* with an above-average number of cultural institutions and increase it in depressed areas.

The control commission therefore acts as an arbiter between the regions and in the setting of priorities, with a view to hastening the development of backward regions. Another of its functions is to keep a record of depressed regions and areas covering the whole or part of a *gouvernorat* and to propose, if necessary, that they be designated priority development areas.

Yet another of its tasks is to work out a policy for stimulating regional activities, by such means as: public expenditure in priority areas (communications, education, cultural institutions, etc.); selective State aid, involving, for example, regional taxation, subsidies and loans; the setting up of regional development boards with the participation of the national investment board (planning office, medium and long-term credit facilities, use of local private savings); administrative decentralization, involving the appointment of regional commissioners for development responsible for co-ordination and the organization of activities at the area level.

The sector committee on culture and human advancement has taken into account the following in its planning of cultural development: the changes that have taken place in Tunisian society and its future evolution; the cultural needs of the population as expressed by the organs of popular opinion (local party branches, trade unions, etc.) in regional and local committee reports; the cultural objectives in view; the resources available in the way of equipment and trained personnel.

### **Evaluation of cultural needs**

The best results in this field have been achieved by the sector committee on culture and human advancement, which has based its work on the reports furnished by the regional and local committees set up when the 1965-68 four-year development plan was drawn up, which have continued their work in preparation for the 1969-72 four-year plan.

In evaluating cultural requirements the Office of the State Secretary for Culture

and Information also takes into account the following: the findings of surveys and polls carried out by central, regional and local cultural committees and by the Tunisian broadcasting company; the conclusions formulated by supervisory staff in their reports on inspection missions; cultural needs voiced by the branches of the Destour Socialist Party (local branches, liaison committees, etc.), the unions, national bodies, youth, women's and students' associations.

At the 1966 national census a detailed questionnaire on people's individual cultural interests, standard of educational attainment and cultural needs was attached to the form that had to be filled in by every head of a household.



# The executive machinery

The action embarked upon when the Office of the State Secretary for Culture was set up in 1961 has been based upon the following three principles: the democratization of culture; the 'renationalization' of culture; the decentralization of culture.

This action was intended to comprise four aspects: an economic aspect—culture to be readily available to all; a social aspect—wider possibilities for taking part in producing culture; an ideological aspect—the promotion of national culture and broad access to world culture; a geographical aspect—the installation of a network of cultural establishments throughout the country.

In order to implement this policy the Office of the State Secretary for Culture and Information decided on the setting-up of cultural committees, the opening of cultural and community centres and the reorganization of museums and libraries.

## Cultural committees<sup>1</sup>

The cultural committees, which are subordinated to the Office of the State Secretary for Culture and Information, are organized as follows:

1. *The National Cultural Committee.* The task of this committee, which is based in Tunis, is to draw up an annual programme of cultural and artistic activities for the whole country, to co-ordinate the activities of the central, regional and local committees and, finally, to help to strengthen cultural ties with foreign countries.

The members of the National Cultural Committee are appointed by the President of the Republic, on the proposal of the State Secretary for Culture and Information.

2. *The central cultural committees.* These are thirteen, in number, one for each *gouvernorat*. Their task consists, in particular, in co-ordinating cultural activities within the *gouvernorat* and in laying down the annual programme of activities for the community centres.
3. *The district cultural committees.* These are set up in the chief town of each

1. *Journal Officiel de la République Tunisienne*, decrees of 19 April 1963 and 31 May 1965.

administrative district and ensure the carrying out of the cultural programmes, which they determine in collaboration with the central cultural committee of the *gouvernorat* to which they belong.

4. The local cultural committees. These committees for small communities constitute the final outposts of a highly developed organization which reaches out from the capital to the most remote areas.

The spirit in which this machinery was conceived is not difficult to understand; for the authorities the primary consideration was to take an active interest in the towns, villages and rural settlements of the interior and to lessen the cultural disequilibrium between Tunis and the rest of the country.

This process of decentralization has given some satisfactory results, the concrete proof of which is the fact that in the towns of the interior film clubs, libraries, theatrical and musical groups are becoming more and more numerous. The different cultural committees vie with each other in providing cultural and community centres for their respective regions.

Paying tribute to this process of cultural dissemination which has enjoyed his unflinching support, the Head of State of Tunisia noted in a speech delivered on 21 July 1967 that 'today the most remote regions, where in foregone times life came to a standstill at the end of each day, know the blessings of culture in its most varied and vital forms'.

This network of cultural committees scattered throughout the country has proved to be an effective tool for real cultural decentralization.

Experience has shown, however, that the results obtained by the various cultural committees were uneven. The results, in fact, depended upon the dynamism of the individual members of the committees and upon their sense of initiative and responsibility.

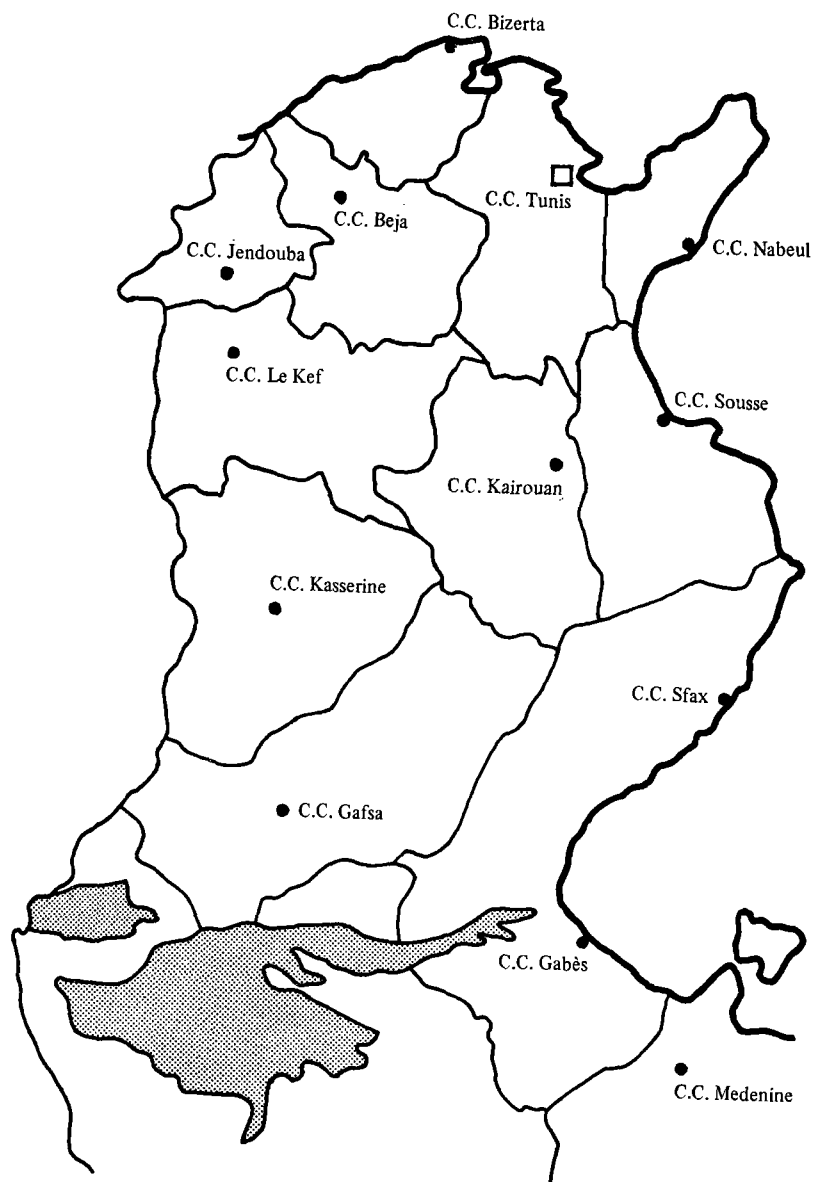
Since these members were voluntary workers the Office of the State Secretary for Culture and Information could not make excessive demands upon them and so decided to appoint to the post of general secretary of each central cultural committee a permanent, full-time, paid organizer.

The general secretaries have since been given executive responsibilities. They represent the State Secretary for Culture and Information in their *gouvernorat*, and take part in the planning, formulation and carrying out of cultural policy in their region.

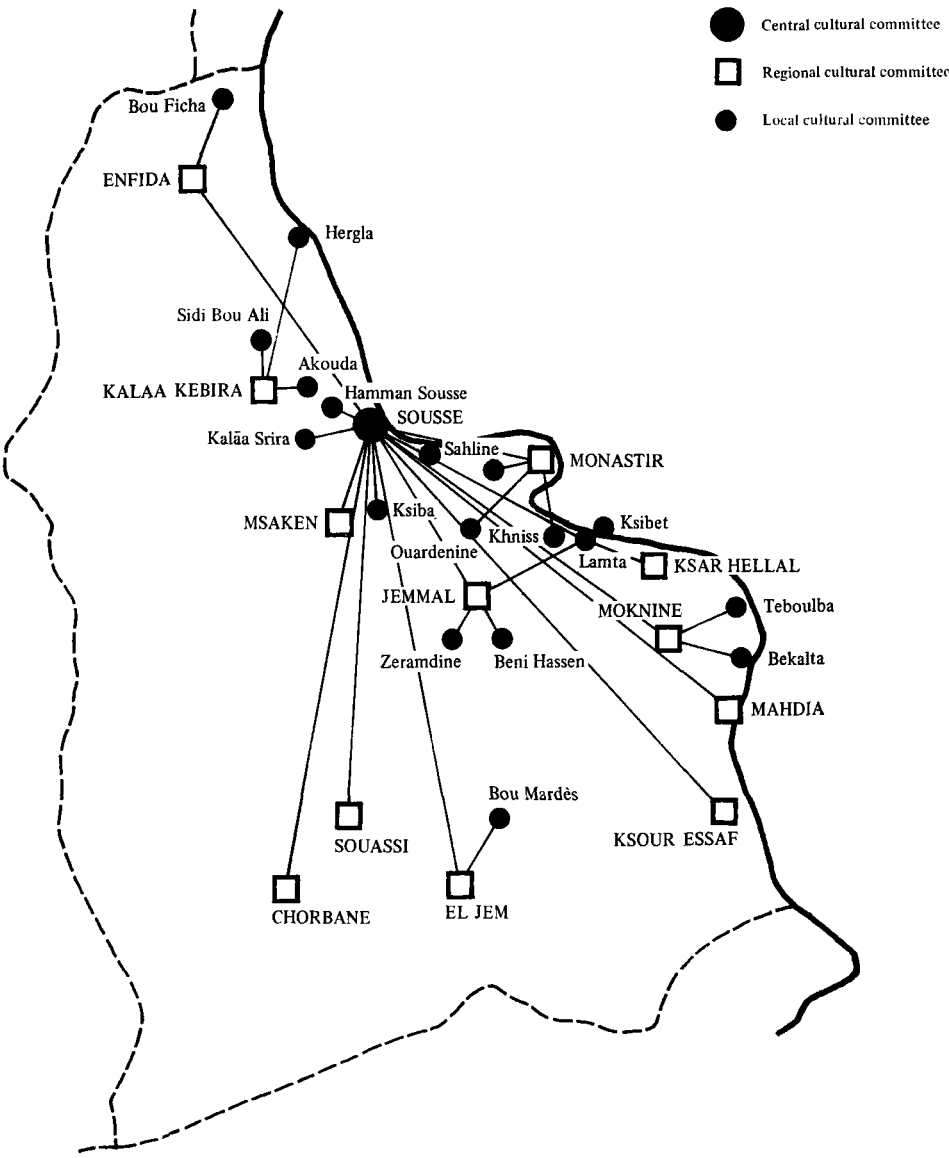
### Cultural centres

As places where people are brought face to face with their own culture and able to compare it with the culture of other lands, cultural centres are regarded by the Tunisian authorities as eminently suitable instruments for carrying out their cultural policy.

Indeed, they can be designed and located in such a way as to bring about the cultural decentralization which is the prime objective of the Office of the State Secretary for Culture and Information. This decentralization is conceived not only geographically ('When the public no longer goes to culture, culture must go to the public and



Central cultural committees  
(one for the principal town of each *gouvernorat*)



Gouvernorat of Sousse.  
Distribution of cultural committees within a *gouvernorat*

stimulate it'),<sup>1</sup> but also socially, in ensuring that the benefits of culture, instead of being reserved for a select few, are available to, and within the reach of, all.<sup>2</sup>

The participation of the population in the life of the Tunis Cultural Centre, despite its restricted premises and the fact that it cannot seat more than 320 people, demonstrates the success of this formula of a multi-purpose centre.

A total of 128,700 people took part in the 437 events organized, at the rate of 54 a month, at the Cultural Centre during the 1965/66 season.

These figures refer to concerts and recitals, film programmes and lantern-slide lectures, etc., about foreign countries. They do not take into account the 47 other lectures, nor the 51 theatrical performances given by the drama company of the cultural centre, nor the 21 sessions of recorded music with commentaries, nor the 25 exhibitions, nor the receptions, nor the use of the bar or the library.

One of the main aims of the cultural centres and the cultural committees is, first of all, to contribute to the renewal of the national culture: in all *gouvernorats* those in charge of cultural activities are invited to take part in the resurgence of local folk-lore and to take an interest in archaeology, popular poetry and traditional music, in close collaboration with the relevant departments of the Office of the State Secretary for Culture and Information. Worthy of note, for instance, is the research carried out in the field of traditional music (*malouf*). This research is all the more useful in that the old tunes were not written down. It is urgent that these be collected before those who still pass them on orally disappear.<sup>3</sup> The local cultural committees have been asked, in particular, to seek out people with knowledge of *malouf*, to record the tunes of the different regions and to interest young Tunisian men and women in them.

But the concern for the promotion of national culture goes hand in hand with the desire to acquaint Tunisians with world culture. Thus, at the Tunis Cultural Centre, for example, Tchaikovsky concerts alternate with concerts of *malouf* and the drama group of the Cultural Centre has performed successively Ionesco in the original text, Taoufik El Hakim in an adaptation and a play by a young Tunisian author, *Saada wa Saada*. The works of Ibn Khaldun have been analysed by a French professor from the Sorbonne following commentaries by a Tunisian professor from the University of Tunis; and Shakespeare, Dante, Baudelaire and Goethe have been introduced to the Tunisian public by British, Italian, French and German lecturers.

1. Emmanuel Mounier.

2. '... culture will be understood in the broadest sense, as human culture, including the way of life, view of the world and that awareness that every citizen should have of the social and cultural environment in which he lives. This will involve not only the élite of various kinds but also the most modest layers of society so that they may attain the dignity afforded by an understanding of things of the mind' (note concerning cultural organization in Tunisia by Mr. Chedli Klibi, State Secretary for Culture and Information).

Thus, in the Tunis Cultural Centre, entrance is often free and in no case exceeds 100 millimes (approximately \$0.19 at the time of writing). In 1963 there was a general reduction in the price of theatre tickets that has been maintained right up to the present time. There are special rates (not exceeding 35 per cent of the normal prices) for students, teachers and members of amateur theatrical groups.

3. It has been rightly said that in Africa 'every old man who dies is a library which burns'.

'Foreign Culture Weeks' have been organized, during which the Tunisian public has been introduced to the culture of a fair number of countries linked in friendship with Tunisia: Belgium, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, France, Germany, India, Italy, Latin America, Lebanon, Morocco, Netherlands, Pakistan, Poland, Sweden, Turkey, U.S.S.R.

Thanks to the lantern-slide lectures entitled *Knowledge of the World*, the Tunisian public has been able to get to know numerous countries: Argentina, Black Africa, Egypt, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hawaii, Italy, Japan, Kashmir, Laos, Mexico, Polynesia, Turkey, etc.

Several foreign-film 'months' or 'weeks' have been organized.

Lastly, dozens of plays in the French language and plays written by French, Italian, British, American or Russian authors have been performed both in Tunis and in the towns of the interior.

All 'foreign' programmes have been put on under cultural exchanges or on the basis of commercial contracts.

Sites for theatres and cultural centres are selected in such a way as to ensure that the whole of the country will eventually be covered.

### Community centres

The community centres are for the towns and villages of the interior what the Tunis Cultural Centre is for the capital. It is true that the context is different, but the spirit remains the same. Like the Cultural Centre, the community centres are run by cultural committees and come under the Office of the State Secretary for Culture and Information.

In Tunisia the first community centres were opened in 1960, as the result of initiatives taken locally by individual municipalities or branches of the Destour Socialist Party. The centres soon spread, and in 1962 the Office of the State Secretary for Culture took charge of their organization. The office drew up a systematic time-table providing for the construction of centres to be spread out over a period of several years, in accordance with the four-year plan, and laid down specific standards in regard to the purposes which the premises should be designed to serve.<sup>1</sup>

At the present time in Tunisia there are sixty-five community centres. It is to be noted that for reasons of decentralization the community centres have been constructed first and foremost in remote areas; gradually they will cover the whole country.

One of the salient features of the community centres in Tunisia is that they have been taken under the wing of the party. The local branch of the Destour Socialist Party in the small towns and the party's co-ordinating committee in large towns take charge

1. According to these standards, every community centre must comprise the following premises: a room to be used for film projection and drama performances, an exhibition room, a lecture theatre, a lending and circulating library, a refreshment room and office accommodation for the use of officials of the various national organizations (party, trade union, youth movement, National Union of Tunisian Women, etc.) and the various cultural clubs and associations (theatre, chess, music, painting, etc.).

of the organization and over-all direction of the community centres, and each centre comes under the responsibility of a secretary appointed by the Office of the State Secretary for Culture. A minimum level of general education (*tahcil* or *baccalauréat*) is required of this secretary; he should also know the French language and have some kind of qualification in adult education. The secretaries of community centres are therefore more often than not primary-school teachers or have experience of youth work, being chosen for their open-mindedness and their sense of responsibility. They also attend a six-week specialized training course as an introduction to the work they will have to undertake in the community centres.

This work is not easy, involving as it does contributing to the civic, social and cultural advancement of a very heterogeneous population made up of landowners from rural areas, agricultural workers, civil servants, those involved in education (teachers and students) and also the unemployed and the illiterate.

The extreme difference in social and cultural levels constitutes a real handicap in carrying out this work in a way which is truly effective and adapted to everyone. At any rate, what has been done so far, coming on top of the vast educational programme under way at the present time, already constitutes an appreciable contribution to the development of the country, which should, in the near future, be able to reap full benefit from it.

### **The International Cultural Centre of Hammamet**

Situated in one of the most beautiful areas of the Mediterranean, with a sandy beach, a large number of bungalows spread out in a twenty-five acre park and an open-air theatre for 1,000 spectators, fitted out with modern lighting and sound amplification equipment, the International Cultural Centre of Hammamet has the task of providing a meeting-ground not only for Mediterranean writers and artists but also for men from all countries of the world who feel drawn towards Mediterranean culture and who seek to exchange ideas and compare their experience.

Nine international seminars or symposia of a cultural or scientific nature were held in Hammamet in 1968. Most dealt with subjects relating to the Mediterranean area, ranging from the biology and genetics of Mediterranean man to the problems of artistic creation in the contemporary Maghreb novel.

A number of national meetings of a high cultural level have been organized at the centre, such as the third conference on adult education by television, arranged by the Adult Education Institute in May 1968, or the seminar on modern and contemporary history, organized by the Arts Faculty of Tunis University for students from the history department, with the participation of lecturers from Tunis University and guest lecturers from various French universities. But the most original activity and the one which aroused the most interest in the country was what the director of the centre called 'Sundays at Hammamet'.

Thanks to the collaboration of the dean of the Arts Faculty and the enthusiasm of students from various faculties, successive groups of thirty students came to the centre

and spent a day discussing with their teachers previously chosen themes such as the future of Tunisian culture, the historian's craft, the Moslem and his values, and the civilization of the Mediterranean area.

The centre provided free transport and cheap lunches for the students.

Apart from the International Festival of Hammamet, which takes place every summer and has come to be accepted as an important international cultural activity, the centre allows its facilities to be used during the period starting 1 September and ending 31 May for any international scientific or artistic symposium. It makes the necessary arrangements, if so desired, for Tunisians to take part in these symposia, and can offer board and lodging and suitable working facilities for sixty participants, twenty in single rooms and forty in rooms with two beds, at a charge of 3.5 Tunisian dinars per person per day.

The centre also provides twenty fellowships of a month's duration for young writers and artists (painters, musicians, producers, actors, etc.) from the Mediterranean countries so that they may devote themselves to creative work. The simultaneous presence of young creative artists of different nationalities allows fruitful exchanges to take place, and the fact that the bungalows are spread out over the park makes isolation and concentration possible. The fellowships are awarded to young people on the recommendation of a music, art or drama school, university or publishing house. They do not, however, cover travel expenses, which are the responsibility of the person to whom the fellowship is awarded or of the institution which recommends him.

Depending upon the availability of places, the centre can accept paying guests who wish to rest or work there, also at a charge of 3.5 dinars per person per day.

Lastly, outside the period of the festival the centre makes its open-air theatre facilities available for groups of actors, in collaboration with Tunisian producers and playwrights, to stage performances, which may be given subsequently for the purposes of the centre.

During the period of rehearsals the Tunisian and foreign actors are looked after by the centre, the terms being determined separately in each case.

## Museums

For the Tunisian authorities museums have an important role to play as an instrument of collective culture. Their role is primarily to preserve the heritage of the past, but they have also to act as popular centres of visual information, enabling Tunisians to love and know their past as the source and origin of that upward thrust which must support the new edifice they are seeking to build.

A programme which is being carried out at the present time divides museums into four types: general national museums, regional museums, local museums and specialized museums.



### *General national museums*

These museums serve to house articles from all the different periods of Tunisia's history and originating from various regions of the country.

The Bardo Museum is a good example of this type, containing collections which range from prehistory to modern times and originating from excavations carried out throughout the country, or from purchases or gifts.

These museums justify their existence by the fact that the juxtaposition of artefacts that have been found in different parts of the country or which belong to different historic periods allows fruitful comparisons to be made and illustrates the evolution of artistic creation through the different civilizations which have flourished in Tunisia.

### *Regional museums*

These museums are to be found in the principal town of each *gouvernorat*. They house the finds which have been made within the limits of the *gouvernorat*, and reflect the typical or distinctive features of the region.

### *Local museums (including open-air museums) and museums housed in ancient monuments*

The location of these museums is justified by three factors:

1. Decentralization. Museums have a role to play in the education of the masses, and distances have often constituted an obstacle to their fully performing this function. Museums must therefore be brought nearer to the public. The best way of doing this is by providing local museums.
2. Certain areas contain great archaeological treasures. To preserve these treasures it is necessary to have a collection of antiquities or, if there are enough of them, a museum.
3. Apart from its role in educating the people, the local museum adds to the tourist attractions of the country and therefore contributes to its economic development. Some local museums have already been established; these are at Mactar, Utica Monastir and Carthage. Others, e.g. at El Jem, are being planned.

### *Specialized museums*

These museums can be divided into museums specializing in a historical period and museums specializing in a particular field.

In the first category, a Dar Hussein Museum has been established, devoted to the Moslem Middle Ages (Aghlabite, Fātimite and Hafsite periods).

A museum devoted to the period of the Beys and the Husseinite dynasty is being planned, as is a museum of the Revolution.

In the second category two projects have been selected, museums of mosaics and a prehistory museum.

*Museums of mosaics.* The wealth of mosaics in Tunisia amply justifies the establishment of museums of this type. Moreover, it will be possible, by means of such museums, to trace the artistic evolution of mosaic work chronologically and thematically.

It is also envisaged that museums will be set up on the very sites of the excavations since mosaic work is usually set in the floor rather than on walls and it is desirable that the archeological context be respected.

The exceptional group of mosaics discovered in the Cape Bon area gives grounds for hoping that it is here that the first museum of this kind will be opened.

*Prehistory museum.* The prehistory museum will encompass all the prehistory of Tunisia. It will be situated at Carthage, which has two advantages. Firstly, it will be near to the university centres, thus making useful collaboration possible. Secondly, the Punic collections which exist at Carthage should gain from being viewed alongside prehistoric objects.

Other specialized museums—museums of culture and science museums—are also envisaged.

*Museums of culture.* Studies are being made as to the possibility of setting up museums of culture. Tunisia would be very much in favour of this project, for which Unesco could provide assistance, particularly in the matter of arranging exchanges, as this would tend to make the different countries better acquainted with each other.

*Science museums.* Tunisia is extremely keen to have a science museum. Its role would be to trace the genesis and evolution of technology, a matter of the utmost importance for a young, developing country. A museum of this type can influence young people towards a career and have an appreciable effect upon the economy, as well as playing a cultural role.

Unesco has already shown an interest in projects of this kind and the scope of its action might be further extended.

## Libraries

*Municipal book-lending centres.* Book-lending centres have recently been set up in fifty-two Tunisian municipalities. These, in fact, are collections of books that may be loaned out for home reading. The purpose of this measure is to introduce reading into the everyday habits of the Tunisian citizen.

The subsequent transformation of each of these municipal book-lending centres into the nucleus of a public library is also envisaged. These would eventually become full-fledged public libraries.

*Public libraries for children.* Twenty-one public libraries for children, completely independent of the public libraries for adults, were opened on 31 December 1966.

There were two reasons behind this: the number of prospective young readers in Tunisia; and the fact that these children's libraries constitute real preparatory schools for adult readers.

*Mobile libraries.* The aim of these is to serve the rural areas and ensure the promotion of culture in these areas.

*Centre for library techniques.* This serves to make studies and proposals in regard to the technical and economic aspects of library activities throughout the country.

# Traditional and new channels for the dissemination of culture

The tremendous hold gained by the mass media throughout the world and the increasing size of the public have caused those responsible for information and culture to consider the effects and scope of the press, cinema, radio and television, to inquire into how they can best be used for cultural ends and to evaluate their influence upon society.

In Tunisia full recognition has been given to the benefits to be obtained from the mass media as far as cultural promotion is concerned. It is significant that radio and television broadcasting as well as the cinema are the responsibility of the State Secretary for Culture and Information.

A rational way of making use of the means of mass communication has been worked out, but this has not prevented the intensive use of traditional channels, in modernized form.

The aim is that the two types of channel should supplement and support each other.

## Lectures

Thus, for example, the lecture, which today for the most part appeals only to a small number of intellectuals or specialists, has become more attractive. The traditional lecture has been replaced by lectures using theatrical aids (scenes read or performed by actors, poetry recitals) and illustrated lectures (projection of slides or short films), which reach out to a much wider and more varied public.

## Exhibitions

Many people do not attend exhibitions, either because they are put off by the socially fashionable character that many of these exhibitions have assumed or because they do not feel concerned or capable of profiting or because they are not sufficiently encouraged to go. In Tunis there has been a steady increase both in the number of exhibitions and in the number of people attending them—fourteen exhibitions in 1964,

eighteen in 1965, twenty-seven in 1966 and forty-six in 1967. The reason for this is, firstly, that there has been an attempt to vary as much as possible the themes, in art exhibitions (children's drawings, pupils' work, art reproductions, museum pieces, works by local painters, paintings by well-known artists, posters, art photographs) and in science exhibitions (zoological, botanical, geological, mechanical, archaeological, books).

Another reason is the attempt that has been made to improve the publicity arrangements for these exhibitions and the way in which they are presented. By way of publicity, factual information in as vivid a form as possible is sent to the heads of firms and to the headmasters of schools for wide distribution. This has allowed a new public to be reached, often through guided tours. By way of presentation, exhibitions are organized in premises adjoining play-houses, with a view to bringing in not only the public that normally goes to exhibitions but also those who attend the cinema, go to concerts, etc. Recorded commentaries are also being introduced so as to reach the public at large, and not merely intellectuals for whom the work is sufficient in itself. Lastly, a musical background is provided, suited to the nature and theme of the exhibition presented, and short films and slides having some bearing on the subject are shown.

Admission to all exhibitions is free.

It is also to be noted that mobile exhibitions can be most effective; a stumbling-block that has been encountered here, however, is the lack of suitable transport equipment. There has been talk of an agreement between the Tunis Cultural Centre and Tunisian Railways for the purpose of organizing an exhibition of this kind in a specially equipped train.

Unesco could be of service here by organizing show exhibitions fitted out with all appropriate equipment to serve as models, by preparing and issuing monographs concerning the necessary equipment, by designing and constructing a demonstration 'exhibition bus' to be used for mobile exhibitions and by acting as an intermediary between countries in need of such buses and the constructors.

### **Libraries**

It is undeniable that the library remains one of the most effective means of disseminating culture, but it has been necessary for it to become more decentralized and specialized. With this in mind the authorities have set up district libraries, municipal book-lending centres and libraries for children, for adolescents and for adults, whilst mobile libraries carry books to the most remote parts of the country.

The children's libraries are run by women librarians since they are more capable of understanding the child's mind.

### **Theatre**

It has now become possible to take out a subscription to the theatre over a certain period and each year there are fewer and fewer boulevard comedies and more and

more performances of a higher cultural level. The purpose of this is to educate the public and gradually get them used to a better class of production.

For this reason and also in order to reach a larger audience, series of plays of high cultural value have been put on since 1966. These plays are specially meant for teachers, students, the older pupils in schools, youth clubs and amateur actors. The price of tickets has been considerably reduced so that the different layers of the population can attend these performances, and large subsidies have been granted by the Tunis municipality to enable high-quality plays to be put on.

Here too there has been a policy of decentralization. Foreign theatrical groups often tour the provinces, and the Tunis municipal company and the company from the Cultural Centre go from the north down to the far south, performing on improvised stages in market squares and barns. The actors are always certain of finding a large and enthusiastic public, which is a stimulus to increasing the number of ventures of this kind.

### Other channels

The three aims of the mass media may be defined as being to inform, to instruct and to entertain.

It is indisputable that if these media can be used for the education of the masses this will constitute a large step forward in cultural development.

The educational role of the radio, television and cinema can no longer be ignored today, particularly in the developing countries where there are still a large number of illiterate people. Nevertheless, one must 'beware lest these all-powerful media, which allow of a wide dissemination of culture, become either "a form of plebeian barbarity" as feared by certain intellectuals or, in the words of the sociologist Adorno, "a mass illusion" the result of which will be to prevent the growth of self-reliant independent individuals capable of conscious judgement and decision'.<sup>1</sup>

If these dangers can be avoided the mass media can be made into the most powerful and effective means of disseminating culture. It has been calculated that when *Le Cid* was put on by the French television it reached an audience of 5 million viewers in one evening, whereas the Comédie-Française took eight years to reach this figure.

There is, however, a problem to be solved in those countries where the poorer classes are still predominant: even though most people may possess a radio, this is not the case with television sets, which cost more. An attempt has been made in Tunisia to overcome this difficulty by providing all cultural centres, community centres, etc., with television sets and by the municipalities encouraging public establishments such as cafés and clubs to install them as well.

The financial authorities have taken steps to abolish customs duty on television sets.

Television and radio clubs have been formed in all cultural establishments.

1. *Cultural Policy: A Preliminary Study*, 2nd ed. rev., Paris, Unesco, 1969, p. 28-9 (Studies and Documents on Cultural Policies, 1).

As for the cinema, both the cultural centres and the community centres organize film shows of a cultural nature which are of interest to all layers of society. For example, the Tunis Cultural Centre alone organized from October 1966 to June 1967, 439 film shows arranged under the following headings: masterpieces of the seventh art; children's cinema; educational cinema; film festival; student cinema; scientific cinema; films from the Film Library.

Cultural films are distributed throughout the country by means of the cultural centres and community centres.

Mobile cinema units tour Tunisia organizing free film sessions in areas that do not possess a cinema and above all in places that have not yet been reached by electricity.

In a developing country the dissemination of culture would be both an illusion and an injustice if it applied only to the literate layers of the population. This is one of the reasons for the great importance accorded by the Tunisian authorities to audio-visual media, which are the only appropriate means of reaching the whole population in any country that has a large number of illiterate people. This is also one of the reasons why the Tunisian authorities have decided to carry out a major drive to eradicate illiteracy.

As has been seen above (pages 26-31), a national literacy plan, in which cultural activities play a large part, has been drawn up and put into effect under the guidance of the Adult Education Institute.

Each 15 October, on the occasion of National Liberation Day, the staff of the Adult Education Institute, in the presence of distinguished national figures and high-ranking officials, present a progress report on the literacy campaign to the Head of State, in response to the wish he expressed at the inauguration of the campaign in 1966.

# Aid to artistic creation

Conscious not only of the aid which should be given to artistic creation but also of the necessity of guaranteeing a liberal climate in which to work, the Tunisian authorities are unsparing in their efforts to do all they can to provide both material and psychological encouragement to artists. Moreover, whilst they do not refuse to offer guidance, the only law which they impose is that of quality.

## **Purchase of works of art by the State**

*Art decoration of public buildings.* By virtue of a decree dated 27 August 1962, a commission for the art decoration of public buildings decides upon the decoration of all public buildings chargeable to the State, the local authorities, public institutions and State-owned offices and companies. The sums allocated for the decoration of each building may be as much as 1 per cent of the cost of construction work. The purpose of this measure is fourfold, namely: aid to artistic creation; aid to creative artists; embellishment of public buildings; integration of the artist's activity into the life of the society.

*Purchase of works of art.* A commission whose members are appointed by the State Secretary for Culture and Information visits all art exhibitions and acquires for the State those works which are considered to have the most merit. In addition to encouraging artistic creation and providing aid for artists, these purchases will enrich the modern art museums that are in the process of being established.

*Purchase of books and reviews.* The Office of the State Secretary for Culture and Information purchases, by way of encouraging both the author and the publisher, from 10 to 20 per cent of the initial print-run of each book published, up to a maximum of 500 copies, after consulting an *ad hoc* committee. It also acquires 23 to 40 per cent of the print-run of periodicals, depending on the number of copies printed.



*Purchase of films.* The Office of the State Secretary for Culture and Information purchases a number of copies of each new Tunisian film, often at a price higher than cost. The aim of this is, firstly, to encourage Tunisian cinema production and, secondly, to form a film library which will provide films for the various cultural establishments of the country.

### **Subsidies**

A special allowance is granted to each cultural committee that so requests, to enable it to form a drama group and a music group.

The drama groups and music groups get additional subsidies from the municipal authorities, the amount varying according to the possibilities of each community.

The Office of the State Secretary for Culture and Information meets the expenses of each first performance, as a form of material assistance for the drama groups and as a way of encouraging them to renew their repertoire.

To help bring about decentralization in the theatre, this office also covers the travelling expenses of the drama groups within the country.

### **Study fellowships and residence grants**

Travel grants for further study in music and the fine arts are awarded each year by the Office of the State Secretary for Culture and Information to musicians, painters, sculptors, decorators, publicists, playwrights, etc. People awarded these fellowships are expected to provide a detailed report upon their return.

Residence at the International Arts Centre of Paris is offered each year for periods ranging from three to twelve months to gifted young Tunisian artists whose talents still need to be developed.

Stays of one to three months are offered to artists and writers at the International Cultural Centre of Hammamet and at the Writers' and Artists' Centre of Medjez El Bab, where they find the necessary peace of mind to devote themselves to their work.

### **Prizes and competitions**

Numerous prizes intended to encourage artistic creation are awarded each year by the various cultural organizations for: the best novel; the best play; the best translated play; the best adapted play; the best work for children; the best Tunisian film; the best film-script; the best painting; the best collection of poetry; the most beautifully produced publication, etc.

### **Advice for amateur drama groups**

A commission made up of leading figures in drama and the arts gives free advice to amateur drama groups on request concerning the choice of plays to be incorporated in their repertoire or the production of plays which they have chosen to perform.

### **Protection of literary and artistic property**

The Society of Tunisian Authors and Composers (SODACT), established on 20 June 1968 in pursuance of the law of 14 February 1966 relating to literary and artistic property and, in particular, Article 31 thereof, was entrusted, by a decree dated 9 September 1968, with sole responsibility for handling the copyright and defending the moral and material interests of Tunisian authors and composers. Article IV of this decree reads as follows: 'The SODACT shall, in relation to users of works, represent its members, or foreign societies of authors, or members of such societies, whether by virtue of specific authorization or of a reciprocal agreement.' It is to be noted that SODACT comes under the Office of the State Secretary for Culture and Information.

In providing for the creation of a national organization of authors the Tunisian authorities took particular account of the beneficial effect that such an organization may have both in the dissemination of world culture and in promoting intellectual creation in the country.

As for the dissemination of culture, it is undeniable that this depends primarily upon the steps taken to make Tunisian and foreign works available to the public. As is evident from the law of 14 February 1966, which gives writers and artists a number of rights designed to enable them to safeguard their moral and material interests, the traditional function of a copyright law is above all a negative one, in that it forbids the public to use literary or artistic works covered by copyright without the authorization of the rightful beneficiaries. Thanks to the existence of SODACT those in Tunisia who want to use literary or artistic works can be confident of easily obtaining the prescribed authorization for the vast majority of national or even foreign works.

But it has been the aim of the authorities not only to protect and disseminate existing works but also directly to encourage artistic creation. SODACT provides its members with a guarantee that they will get fair remuneration each time their works are performed, presented, broadcast or reproduced in any form whatsoever either in the Tunisian Republic or abroad, where organizations similar to SODACT protect its copyright material under reciprocal agreements.

It goes without saying that many Tunisian creative artists want to open their compatriots' eyes to foreign works. To this end they make translations and adaptations for which the consent of the original author is indispensable: SODACT assumes responsibility for taking the necessary steps to obtain this consent on behalf of Tunisian translators and adaptors.

Moreover, the creative artist's profession is more often than not a risky one as some works are slow in gaining public approval while others into which much time and energy have been poured fade into oblivion almost as soon as they see the light of day. SODACT seeks to reduce the risks of the artist's profession and to ensure for all creative artists the peace of mind which is indispensable to them. For this purpose, a small part of the fees that it receives on behalf of Tunisian and foreign authors goes to a fund for local creative artists.

Lastly, SODACT has a watchdog function: by preventing at the source the copy-righting of works resulting from plagiarism it gives both its members and those foreign

authors who have specially authorized it an assurance that improper use will not be made of their works by a third party.

### **The development of art education**

In collaboration with the Office of the State Secretary for Culture and Information, the Office of the State Secretary for Education has recommended the establishment, in each secondary school, of a drama group, a choir and orchestra and a film club.

The teaching of arts subjects (music, drawing) has been developed in both primary and secondary schools. Numerous circulars from the Ministry of Education have furnished advice concerning the use of modern methods and audio-visual techniques particularly in teaching the history of art.

The Office of the State Secretary for Culture and Information encourages the cultural centres and the community centres to establish and develop sections for art education.

Exhibitions of students' work are held in the cultural centres, community centres and children's libraries.

### **National festivals**

The following festivals are organized every year by the Office of the State Secretary for Culture and Information: *malouf* (Tunisian classical music); Tunisian song; folklore; amateur theatre; school drama; popular poetry; equestrian games.

As numerous prizes are awarded at these festivals (for example, during the amateur theatre festival a prize is given to the best actor, the best actress, the best production, the best adaptation, etc.), they play an important role in the development of artistic activity and in aiding artistic creation. The groups and orchestras which take part in these festivals are selected by *ad hoc* committees and this tends to encourage them to improve their standards throughout the year and to undertake original productions in the hope of being chosen by the selection committees.

On 7 November 1962 the Head of State gave a speech on problems relating to the theatre, which he considers 'a powerful means of disseminating culture and one of the most effective means of educating the public'.

During this speech the Head of State announced that instructions would be sent by the Secretary of State for Education to all secondary schools to the effect that theatrical activities should be accorded the same importance as sports and games. Since that date, 7 November has been celebrated annually as National Theatre Day. On this day, theatrical companies stage their best productions in all the *gouvernorats* of the Republic. Lectures, symposia and exhibitions on and about the theatre are organized in all cultural centres and community centres. A competition offering numerous prizes is open to all drama groups from schools.

## Training of staff

### *Cultural activities organizers*

The development of centres for the dissemination of culture in Tunisia (cultural centres, community centres, etc.) creates a growing need for organizers.

The cultural committees make use of three kinds of organizers: full-time, permanent, paid organizers; organizers employed on a part-time basis; and unpaid organizers working on a voluntary basis. The latter are generally teachers but the permanent organizers are trained, according to their speciality, by the following establishments: the School of Fine Arts; the National Music and Dance Conservatory; the Drama Centre.

These organizers subsequently undergo in-service training and take part in seminars specially organized for them.

### *Social-education instructors*

Special training courses are organized for social-education instructors.

### *Staff of the Archaeological Institute*

Immediately after Independence Tunisia lacked not only higher technical staff (architects, decorators, mosaicists, etc.) but also research staff and scholars.

Various measures have been taken to remedy this situation.

*Training of higher technical staff.* A school has been established for this purpose called the Centre of Applied Arts. It provides training for: mosaicists, not only for the purpose of preserving ancient mosaics but also so that copies can be made enabling this art to become known; sculptors in plaster and in stone; plasterers or moulders; draftsmen.

This school provides for three years of education spread out over two departments: department for practical work (manual work); department for theoretical work (groundwork, history of art, archaeology, etc.).

The best students can become foremen in charge of archaeological excavation sites.

*Training of architects.* The Tunis School of Fine Arts trains architects who, at the end of their studies, are obliged to continue their training by working for a period of time for the State.

*Training of scientific staff.* The Office of the State Secretary for Culture and Information awards fellowships for higher studies in history and archaeology and for attending the Louvre School in Paris.

Before being entrusted with the responsibility of directing a museum or an exca-

vation, students who have taken their degrees have to attend a number of practical training courses.

In view of the limited number of senior staff and in order to ensure more rapid and more intensive specialization, steps are being taken to appoint curators responsible for a particular historical period in several museums at the same time.

*Training of library staff*

*Junior technical staff (clerks).* One year of theoretical and practical studies at the Training Centre in the National Library.

*Intermediate technical staff (assistant librarians).* Theoretical training at the Institut Ali Bach Hamba (Tunis), followed by practical work at the Tunis National Library.

*Higher technical staff and scientific staff.* Study fellowships in Europe, particularly in Paris and Brussels.

## Free access to a free culture

Although Tunisia may be poor in natural resources, her great asset surely lies in the fact that she is aware of this and that she has understood that in the final analysis the basic wealth of a country is constituted by those who inhabit it.

And so every year since Independence more than a quarter of the national budget has been allocated to education and culture.

The reason for this is that, for the Tunisian authorities, the right to culture proclaimed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights must become a reality. Is not the introduction of free education, unrestricted and without charge, to be followed by that of free culture?

Nothing could yield a better dividend than this, for the aim of culture as it is sought in Tunisia is not only to increase everyone's practical knowledge but also to invest and earn a return on human resources—that capital asset of inestimable worth, particularly in young countries—thus ensuring the 'full employment of mental resources', which is, as François Perroux says, the key problem of development.