
ARTS & LETTERS

Public funding may "breed culture," but it may also "imperil art." New York City, for example, recently launched a program to pay 300 artists \$10,000 each, plus other benefits, for one year's work. To many people, this sounds utopian; to others, like *New York Times* critic Hilton Kramer, it is an indiscriminating "welfare program for artists" that encourages mediocrity.

Will future government-assisted growth emphasize quantity or quality? Will public funding reward popularity or original talent? Better management alone will not solve the crisis in the arts, Zeigler warns, for the problem is above all one of leadership and philosophy. What are needed are visionary men and women—artists and managers—who want to inspire the best the arts have to offer.

OTHER NATIONS

That Noisy Isle

"Will There Always Be An England?" by William Haley, in *The American Scholar* (Summer 1978), 1811 Q St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009.

England has fallen from its imperial heights as rapidly as any nation in history. Prime Minister James Callaghan's Labor Party government currently faces grave labor agitation and economic woes, friction with its European Common Market partners, and pressure to give autonomy to Scotland and Wales.

But, although Britain seems to be teetering on the brink of ruin, it will survive, says Haley, former director-general of the BBC and editor of *The Times* of London.

The English are still making important adjustments. They are renegotiating the social contract against a background of rapid social reform that "proved false to its promises and damaging in its effects," Haley writes. Nationalization of major industries and health services at the end of World War II resulted in bureaucratic waste and inefficiency.

Today, Britain experiences iconoclasm and dissent, exacerbated by the nation's rapid decline in world power. Authority is no longer trusted; the masses of people feel that the "professionals" have let them down. Big labor, "the most powerful organized force in the land," is frequently disruptive; the unions lack internal cohesion and cannot always control their own members.

But the questioning of established values is not new; Britain's adversary system of law and politics reflects a "national passion for argument," says Haley. What has changed is the scale of debate, thanks to the expanded role of press, radio, and television. Britain "is an isle full of noises." What is really happening, he suggests, is that "a healthy skeptical English democracy is seeking to establish new foundations."