

the usefulness of holding a major book exhibition really served by censoring the contributions to it from other states? How can we expand the distribution of films when borrowing them from the *cinémathèques* in our embassies is restricted by local authorities, or when the films we submit for participation in festivals and film weeks are subject to censorship? Why are invitations addressed to people active in the cultural field so often refused, or simply not accepted, in the same countries with a frequency that leaves no choice but to conclude that direct international contacts for people in those countries are highly restricted?

The question of access and contacts is directly related to the bilateral and multilateral co-operation that we have set for ourselves as an objective. How can these exchanges be balanced and realize their full potential if some of the participants do not have full access to culture achievements at home and abroad and are not able to contact their contemporaries freely and directly? For instance, in the field of *avant-garde* painting, how can an art critic from a country where he is denied access to recent developments which are not recognized and even suppressed in his own country and who has little contact with events outside make a useful contribution to a seminar or colloquium on this subject?

These considerations are related to the second order of problems which derive from the lack of confidence in the individual and the *étatisation* of culture that prevails in some countries. I do not intend to go into the philosophy implied in this attitude. It has already been well explored in a number of recent interventions.

But we note that, with countries where the authorities do not trust the individual's taste, where they do not credit him with sufficient maturity to decide what he wants to see, read and hear, artistic and literary exchanges are unbalanced. On the one side, these restrictive attitudes mean that proposals to send performing artists and exhibitions of various kinds are often turned down because they do not conform to official views on acceptable artistic forms and expressions in some countries, while, on the other side, these same countries are given a free hand to express their cultural achievements abroad as they wish.

Some delegations here have complained about what they perceive to be imbalances in cultural exchanges, adducing various statistics which sometimes do not stand up clearly in the face of facts and figures cited by other delegations. But have they ever questioned that the practices of their governments which restrict the importation of cultural goods — whether books or films or exhibitions or concerts — because they insist on deciding what can be presented to their citizens also lead to imbalance? Mr. Chairman these