

DISCUSSION OF THE TWO KEY ADDRESSES

Baron-Renouard (France) presiding.

28. The main theme of the discussion was concerned with **cultural identity and roots**, and their significance in art. The justification of dividing art into two categories only, occidental and non-occidental, was questioned. The predominance of Western influence was brought up. What was the definition of an artist? What is happening to an artist to-day? Is there a need for artists or are theoreticians enough? How can artists cope with a world of bureaucracy, unions and administration? How can creativity and professionalism be brought closer together? French as the language of art, now and in the past.

29. The great number of the questions showed the enthusiasm of the audience. Everybody was anxious to hear what the eminent guest speakers thought of the aspects and problems of art that concerned them as practising artists.

30. Both Professor Galtung and Professor Ki-Zerbo brought up the question of Western influence on the Third World. Professor Galtung took Iran as an example of a country attempting to use a Western economic order. The Islamic world had been here replaced by Western values. The experiment failed because **« You cannot trample on people's spiritual roots »**, as professor Galtung put it. According to him, Africa, too, was in jeopardy, as **« it is ruled by rampant Christianity and capitalism »**. Professor Ki-Zerbo, too, was troubled by the Western influence on his continent. African industrialization is some kind of sub-industrialization, completely dependent on Western economy. He criticized the **« colonialism »** of to-day and that of the past, but admitted that the colonizers had also preserved important works of art. African master-works are in other countries, to-day. It is in books that Africans are now able to look at pictures of the master-works of their artists. People should have concrete contact with the master-works of their own nation. It could inspire them to greater creativity.

31. Professor Galtung as well as his distinguished Colleague agreed that to analyze, classify and split up the definition of artist was futile. This very definition is undergoing constant change. Increased leisure, for instance, changes the old definition of artist. It has now a much wider connotation. Craftsmanship and art meet. People are artists, not only consumers of art. An artist must also act as the spokesman of his people. Artists must be more flexible, adaptable, as new professions are created, new fields conquered. They must be able to communicate with people about a common language.

32. The question of cultural identity and roots seemed to arouse the greatest interest among the listeners. In this part of the discussion, Professor Galtung remarked that Professor Ki-Zerbo's ideas and thoughts and his own were strikingly compatible, although the two came from such different parts of the world. Both speakers emphasized the vital importance of national identity and roots, which were a source of creativeness. History has given us roots. Going back to one's roots is not always biological, a simple return to one's native land. It can be a recourse.

33. Professor Ki-Zerbo pointed out that this problem had been widely discussed in Africa. Exploitation had no colour: white exploits black, black exploits black, etc. Professor Galtung accentuated the importance of honesty in creating art. An artist should take as his basis the society in which he lives, build on his own values. Exchanges should take place between equals, not with those who make you dependent on them. Professor Galtung pointed out the difference between a black artist in America and a black artist in Africa; their positions are quite different. The influence of the environment cannot be overlooked; it is social, spiritual as well as economic. Here, too, the answer is honesty and loyalty to one's own society. Imitation is never the answer.

34. Professor Ki-Zerbo urged artists not to rush into the future. He asked them to look into the past, too, because it was so rich. Africa is not always behind; in some fields it is ahead. Making the best of the past and of the present, whose progress cannot be stopped, is the right way. Preserving one's identity is most essential.

35. Professor Galtung remarked that some artists are torn between their roots and Western culture. Perhaps they have a double identity. Artists in Israel, for instance, face this problem of double identity, or it can be called **« multiple identity »** in many cases. Professor Galtung also discussed the use of the written word as a subtle weapon in to-day's conflicts. He questioned an artist's right to invade a strange culture, depict it in paintings, write books about its traditions and values.

36. Professor Ki-Zerbo wound up the discussion by remarking that every work of art is an expression of identity. One's identity should never be hidden. It ought to be in evolution, in a constant process of change. It should flow on like a river formed by new tributaries, but still drawing strength from its primary source.

The Discussion (continued)

ARTISTS' CONTRIBUTION TO A MORE JUST WORLD ORDER

by Ahmad Sadali, Indonesia.

37. In his address, Mr Sadali discussed the significant and versatile role art has always played in the history of mankind. Art and religion have been inseparable. The world is full of religious objects of art left to us by the great civilizations. The phenomenon called **« religious experience »** has been the instigator of innumerable works of religious art. The speaker said that he sees religiousness and a just world order as the two sides of the same coin. A just world would have a physical as well as a spiritual impact. The word **« just »** would imply fairness, righteousness, equity, impartiality and legality. Mr Sadali was convinced that religious art in particular would make man more receptive to the qualities that make the world a more just place to live in.

38. Mr Sadali urged IAA, Unesco and any world organizations dealing with art education, to pay more attention to religious art forms and others with a pacifying and recomposing effect on the human kind. Mr Sadali wound up his address with an appeal to IAA to clarify the terms **« International Plastic Art »** or **« Contemporary Art »**, which refer to the Western Plastic Arts, and seem to exclude the art of Asian or other Third World countries. A better understanding addressed to these countries and their art would encourage Asian and other Third World artists to work for a more just world order.

ARTISTS AND CONFLICT, OPPRESSION, DISCRIMINATION AND PRIVATION

Slides shown by Suzan Swale, UK.

39. Ms Swale introduced her slide show by a quotation attributed to Franz Kafka: **« The world order is based on a lie »**. Then she told her audience about a small, but highly committed number of artists working within the UK art institution. These artists concern themselves about workers' struggles, the Northern Ireland conflict, disarmament, racial minorities, feminism, unemployment and poverty. The power struggle, political intrusion and social, economic and cultural hegemony within the art institutions themselves, disconcert these artists too. Artists can either record the above problems or try to provide a scenario for political change.

40. The striking, fast-changing slides gave an almost subliminal impression of many current phenomena of our world. The themes ranged from war games, fascism, political commitment, the anti-nuclear movement, capitalist power, ecology, to the misrepresentation of woman by the media. Artists, such as **Victor Burgin, Conrad Atkinson** and **Suzan Swale** herself, had contributed to this performance. Also slides of experimental projects were shown, such as a **Neighbourhood Open Workshop** scheme and a Docklands Community Poster. Some well-known performing artists were introduced.

41. The last slides presented the **Artists' Placement Group** affiliated to the UK/IAA National Committee. It attempts to place artists in the decision-making processes of various industrial concerns, government departments, local town councils, hospitals and similar organizations, so as to give them a chance to use their influence in making a more just world order.