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ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONALE DES ÉTUDES ET RECHERCHES SUR L'INFORMATION

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Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Since I wrote to you last, preparations have gone ahead for the Caracas conference. The vagaries of the international postal service and the problems associated with the distance between Caracas and Leicester have meant that progress has not been as speedy as we originally envisaged. Nevertheless, as you will see from the enclosed information prepared by Peggy Gray, the programme has now been finalized, and all other necessary arrangements completed. For this we are indebted to the Venezuelan Organizing Committee and its Executive Secretary, Dr Gonzalo Palacios and, above all, to Dr Cees Hamelink, a member of our Programme Committee, whose familiarity with Latin America and knowledge of the language has made our task considerably easier than it might otherwise have been. I had hoped to include the first pre-Congress Bulletin with this letter. We understood that we would receive it from the Venezuelan Organizing Committee by September, but so far it has not arrived. I did not feel I could wait any longer before writing, and I hope you will find all the necessary information about the conference in this package.

Unfortunately, not all the information I am able to provide about the conference is agreeable. As you will quickly notice, the cost of the inclusive package deal from London to Caracas has increased from \$900 to \$1250. I am sorry about this. Peggy and Cees have explored every possible avenue, but can find no cheaper way. All we can do is to hope that you will not be deterred by this increase.

Those who wish to take advantage of the package deal, whose departure points are London or Amsterdam, should complete the enclosed gold coloured travel booking form and return it to Peggy Gray at Leicester as soon as possible.

The pink conference registration form should be completed in duplicate by all intending participants, and one copy sent to Leicester and the other to Caracas. See pink form for further details.

As you will see from the gold coloured travel booking form, members travelling to Caracas from North America may arrange a special travel deal with a firm in the USA.

Over the past seven years or so I have been able to report after every assembly and conference an increase in membership, attendance and participation. We have progressed, both quantitatively and qualitatively, throughout the seventies, and whilst I have no qualms whatsoever about the quality of the forthcoming Caracas conference, I must admit to feeling a little apprehensive about the effects of the high travel costs on attendance figures.

I would like to urge you all to do your utmost to attend, although I appreciate the difficulties involved, particularly in the case of members from Africa, Asia and Europe. In so many ways this is a very important conference. It deals with a vital topic of international significance; it is our first meeting in the Third World following the decision taken at the Leicester conference, and I know that our Venezuelan colleagues are making tremendous efforts to ensure that it is a success. They deserve our full support.

From the Office of the President:
Professor James D. Halloran

At previous conferences in recent years we have received grants from UNESCO which have enabled us to subsidise the travel costs of around 12 to 15 members, usually from the Third World. As I mentioned in my last letter, from what UNESCO's observer, Wolfgang Seeger said at the Allensbach meeting in January, we have good reason to think that UNESCO will continue to support our work in this way, perhaps even with an increased grant for the Caracas conference. But this is by no means certain, and we shall not know for sure until early in 1980.

Naturally, I am not in a position to make promises, but any member wishing to be considered for help with travel costs should write to me immediately. Moreover, for those who seek financial aid from their own institutions or from governments or funding agencies, I am always willing to facilitate matters by providing a supporting letter, official invitation, formal request to participate, etc.

On Friday, 13 July 1979, the International Council of IAMCR held a formal business meeting at Beaumont Hall at the University of Leicester. Eighteen members attended, and I am very grateful to all of them for their presence and contributions. The formal meeting was preceded by a full days discussion on Thursday, 12 July, on the Past, Present and Future of the Association. It would be impossible for me to summarize the lengthy and wide-ranging discussion in this letter, but I can assure members that it was well worthwhile. Numerous topics were covered, from financial, organizational and administrative matters, through publications and publicity, to wider political and ideological concerns. Votes were not taken, nor were members unanimous on all issues, but the frank and friendly exchanges made it easier for the Council, at its formal session on July 13th, to make important decisions at several levels about the future of the Association.

Some of these decisions have already led to the appropriate action. For example, it was suggested that it would be better to "break up" the presidential letter, having different sections - perhaps each with a distinct colour (see information on the Caracas conference, International Communication Section meeting, publications proforma, etc.) rather than a combined or all inclusive letter, as in the past. Additional "chapters" in future letters might include reports from Sections, reports from official observers at international conferences, and so on.

At the meeting I was instructed to write to all heads of Sections asking them to provide a progress report and programme proposals in time for the next meeting of the International Council which, it was agreed, should be held (courtesy of Dr Alice Buzlova) in Prague from 21-25 April, 1980.

After receiving reports, the Council appointed Dr Breda Pavlic and Professor Hamid Mowlana as joint heads of the International Communication Section, and Dr Tamas Szecsco and Dr Robin Cheesman as joint heads of the Political Economy Section. A small group of this last-named Section had met, and presented and discussed papers, at a meeting at the University of Illinois in March/April, and another group had met informally on the occasion of the ISA conference in Burgos in July.

I was asked to correspond further with Dallas Smythe and Bill Melody about the organization and programme of the Satellite Technology Section, and Breda Pavlic presented proposals for a programme for the International Communication Section, during which she indicated that this Section might have a meeting in Yugoslavia early in 1980. The Council welcomed this increased activity.

More recently, I have heard from Dr Pavlic that she is planning a meeting of the International Communication Section in Bernardin (Portoroz), Yugoslavia, from 23-26 February 1980. The green coloured form contains details provided by Dr Pavlic, to whom all enquiries about this meeting should be addressed.

Dr Breda Pavlic
Faculty of Sociology, Political Science & Journalism
University of Ljubljana
Titova 102
61000 Ljubljana YUGOSLAVIA

Yassen Zassoursky, joint head of the Professional Training Section, proposed that the Caracas timetable should include a special symposium on the training of journalists, focussing on new international developments (see conference programme). It was agreed that this should be arranged jointly with the AEJ and IOJ, as at Warsaw, and that all other relevant international organizations concerned with professional training should be asked to cooperate. Richard Cole (AEJ) from North Carolina has agreed to work actively with Yassen Zassoursky in this connection.

At the July meeting, the International Council also decided that every member should be asked to provide information about his publications and other relevant activities over the last two years and that, in due course, this information would be incorporated into a report which would be distributed as a "chapter" in the presidential letter. Obviously, if this measure is to serve the intended function, your cooperation is essential. So please complete the enclosed pale blue form and return to Peggy Gray by 30 January 1980. I would also ask the "secretary" or corresponding member of institutions, to make sure that all members of the institution receive copies of the form.

As you know, there has been a tremendous increase in the membership of the Association over the past decade but, even so, there are still quite a number of countries where the Association is not represented. Moreover, there are still many scholars and institutions in our general field of interest whom we might reasonably expect to be members, but who have not yet joined. The International Council was keen to remedy this situation, and it was decided that we should embark on a recruitment campaign. At the end of the meeting some Council members provided the names of individuals and institutions whom we might approach, and others promised to do the same within a week or two. So far, however, the response from Council members has been disappointing. Could I, therefore, appeal to ALL members of the Association, not just members of the Council, to let me have the names of individuals and institutions whom they think might be interested in joining the Association.

Generally, as mentioned above, membership steadily increases, but at one level it also fluctuates. There is a steady stream of new members but, in the case of quite a number of "old members", there seems to be a reluctance to regularly confirm their membership by the payment of their annual dues. There are, in fact, some who "regularly" pay their dues every two years, but only for one year - usually the year in which there is a conference. In a way, this secures their membership according to the constitution, but it is hardly fair to the Association, and betrays something less than a generous spirit. If the one hundred and sixty individuals and thirty three institutions who paid their dues in 1978 but who, in the eleventh month of the year, have not yet paid them for 1979 would hastily remedy this, it would be very much appreciated.

I do not like to have to refer to these matters in every letter, but we are not a rich association. We deliberately keep subscription rates at a low level; yet the costs of our modest, but rapidly developing, operations are constantly increasing. The International Council recognized the problems connected with this at its meeting, when it accepted the inevitability of more money being spent on organization and administration. It was felt, however, that despite the increased costs, our normal commitments could still be met, at least in the immediate future, without an increase in the subscription rates. But - and this is the important point - this depends on all members paying their yearly dues. Bankers Orders are, of course, one way of combating forgetfulness.

I was able to inform the International Council at its July meeting that the UNESCO-related, but privately funded, Foreign Images study was well under way, and that content analysis would be carried out in over twenty countries by IAMCR individual members or affiliated institutions. This is a collaborative international research effort of which we can really

be proud. It was not until after the meeting, however, that I was able to inform Council members and participants in the Foreign Images research, that UNESCO had finally agreed to make a financial contribution towards the cost of the essential pre-analysis meeting which had been proposed in connection with this project. The meeting, which will also discuss a new project focussing on the press coverage of development problems, will be held at UNESCO headquarters in Paris from 12-14 December 1979. But, even now, the funds made available, although probably adequate to meet travel costs, are unlikely to be sufficient to cover accommodation and subsistence. We were also a little late in obtaining confirmation of the financial support to enable us to go ahead with the production of the Monograph stemming from the Warsaw conference. Still, if the authors (two from Poland, two from Britain) keep to their deadlines, we should be able to let all members have a copy of this publication reasonably early in 1980.

The progress and development of the Association is reflected in our growing relationships with other associations with broadly similar interests, and these relationships are often made easier by overlapping membership. Both generally, and through specific members of the Council, the Association liaises with the International Institute of Communications, the International Sociological Association and the International Organisation of Journalists, and a particularly close working relationship has been established with the Association for Education in Journalism, mainly through the services of Richard Cole, Ramona Rush and Yassen Zassoursky. This relationship will undoubtedly be strengthened in the future, following the election of one of the members of the International Council, G. G. Robinson, to be Vice Chairperson of the International Division of the Association for Education in Journalism. I have also been approached by officers of the International Communication Association with a view to establishing some form of associate relationship between the two associations, and I look forward to discussing this with them early next year.

Not surprisingly, in view of our NGO status, and as will have been seen from what has already been written in this letter, we continue to work with UNESCO at several levels. In discussing the past, present and future of the Association, the Council examined this relationship - thoroughly, critically and constructively. It was clear from the discussion that, on the whole, the relationship was valued, but it was equally clear that so was our independence. Some reservations were expressed about UNESCO's apparent unwillingness or inability to make the best use of IAMCR and its members in the planning and execution of its research programme. The progress of the MacBride Commission was also discussed, and the Council recommended that the Programme Committee should consider the possibility of including, in the Caracas programme, a session where the final report of the Commission could be discussed.

The Association was well represented through Council members Olof Hulten, Breda Pavlic and Cees Hamelink, at the August Vienna U.N. Conference on Science and Technology for Development, the last two named presenting papers. In September, together with Council members Kaarle Nordenstreng, Herb Schiller and Cees Hamelink, I attended an international seminar in Tashkent on The Development of Mass Communication Systems and the Training of Mass Media Personnel. The seminar was organized by the USSR Commission for UNESCO and the Union of Journalists of the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic, and was opened by Mr Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow, the Director-General of UNESCO. Later in the same month I participated in a UNESCO meeting of experts in Kuala Lumpur on The Role of Communication in the Dynamics of Nation Building in Asia and Oceania, and visited the Asian Mass Communication Research and Information Centre in Singapore, and the universities of Kebangsaan and Sains Malaysia. I am very keen that we should attract more members, and do more for the development of mass communication research in this part of the world.

At the July meeting in Leicester, the International Council welcomed as new members Breda Pavlic and Robin Cheesman, in their capacities as joint heads of Sections. Following the resignation from the Council of Antonio Pasquali, on account of his position with UNESCO and in accordance with Art. 7b in the Statutes, Oswaldo Capriles from Venezuela was appointed as substitute member of Council for the remainder of the term.

The term of office of all elected officers and members of the governing bodies of the Association expires at the time of the Caracas General Assembly, when new elections will be held. This is another very important reason for having a full and representative meeting in Caracas, for those elected there will be in charge of the Association's affairs for the following four years. So please let me urge you again to make every effort to attend the Caracas conference.

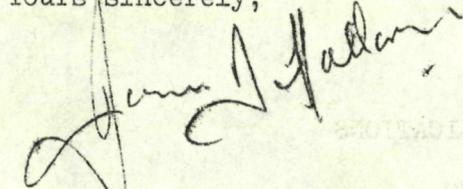
I would also be very grateful if, well before the next meeting of the Executive Board and International Council (which will be held in Prague from 21-25 April 1980), you could let me have, in writing, your proposals for membership of the Executive Board and Council. One of the tasks of the Board at the Prague meeting will be to draw up an election list - having due regard to geographical and disciplinary representativeness - for submission to the Caracas General Assembly. The help of all members of the Association in compiling this list is most welcome, so please let me hear from you.

Looking ahead to the Paris meeting in 1982, I have been asked by Francis Balle to advise him on the dates for this meeting. Late August has been proposed, but a final decision will not be taken until we have sounded opinions and consulted further with our French colleagues, probably at the time of the Prague meeting. Again, any suggestions would be most welcome.

May I take this early opportunity of wishing you all the very best for Christmas 1979, and the New Year 1980.

Hope to see you in Caracas, if not before.

Yours sincerely,



James D. Halloran
President - IAMCR

OTHER MEETINGS:

WORLD CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED NATIONS
DECADE FOR WOMEN: EQUALITY, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE
14th to 30th JULY 1980
"BELLA CENTER" COPENHAGEN DENMARK

Information from: Information Officer
DESI/DPI - Room 1061-I
1980 World Conference for Women
United Nations Secretariat
New York, N.Y.10017 U.S.A.
(Tel: (212) 754-6868)

INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATION ASSOCIATION
HUMAN EVOLUTION AND DEVELOPMENT
18th to 23rd MAY 1980
ACAPULCO MEXICO

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF COMMUNICATIONS
3rd to 6th SEPTEMBER 1980
BOGOTA COLOMBIA
