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INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR MASS COMMUNICATION RESEARCH

ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONALE DES ÉTUDES ET RECHERCHES SUR L'INFORMATION

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NEWS ITEMS - JANUARY 1985

INTRODUCTION

This newsletter has been deliberately delayed and the President apologises for this. Normally, it would have been sent out in early December, but at that time it was not possible to provide definitive information about the 1986 Conference and Assembly - an issue which had aroused so much interest at the Prague meeting and about which many members had made enquiries and had requested an early decision. Fortunately, the information is now available (see enclosed notice) and the President is pleased to write conveying this and other information to members and wishing them all every happiness and success in 1985.

THE PRAGUE CONFERENCE

The comments received both during and after the Conference indicate that it was a great success at every level. It was particularly gratifying to have so many positive responses to the intellectual quality of the proceedings. The appropriate note in this connection was struck by Professor Johan Galtung in his opening address and other contributors were not slow to take the lesson and follow. The idea of having one dynamic speaker of international repute at the opening and only plenary session was very well received and will no doubt set the pattern for future conferences - Recommendations please.

The Conference was attended by over four hundred and forty people from all quarters of the globe, a truly international occasion so appropriate to the theme of Social Communication and Global Problems. What other organization could achieve such participation on such a subject at this level?

In addition to the plenary session, meetings were held by all the Association's sections with the exception of the Legal Section and there were also some joint Section meetings. Numerous other meetings, workshops, seminars and discussion groups covering a wide range of subjects were also well attended.

- (1) SEE BLUE PAPERS ENCLOSED FOR DETAILS OF ALL MEETINGS HELD AT PRAGUE.
- (2) SEE YELLOW PAPERS ENCLOSED FOR LIST OF ALL PAPERS PRESENTED AT PRAGUE. THESE ARE AVAILABLE AT THE STATED PRICE (EX POSTAGE). THOSE INTERESTED SHOULD WRITE TO PEGGY GRAY AT HEADQUARTERS.

THE PRESIDENT AND OFFICERS OF THE ASSOCIATION ARE GRATEFUL TO ALL THOSE MEMBERS WHO MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR THE ABOVE-MENTIONED LISTS TO BE COMPILED.

There were unanimous votes of thanks and appreciation from the Executive Board, International Council and General Assembly to the Czechoslovak Organizing Committee and to all those agencies and individuals, Alice Bunzlova in particular, who did so much to ensure the success of the Conference.

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

CONFERENCE PUBLICATION

Thanks to a grant by Unesco to the Czechoslovak National Commission to Unesco it will be possible to publish a monograph in which the main session papers and responses will be reproduced and the other proceedings summarized. This should be available and distributed free to all members in the summer of 1985.

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

A working group has been set up to explore the possibilities of an IAMCR Journal and to examine the whole question of publicity, recruitment, publications, etc. A link with the Journal of Communication is currently being considered. Comments, suggestions, etc., are invited.

ORGANIZATION, STRUCTURE, PROCEDURES, ETC.

The need to consider the possibility of changes under this heading has been on the agenda for some considerable time although it has generally been accepted that frequent changes in the Statutes should be avoided. No Statute changes were proposed at the Prague meeting, but a working group was established to look into the constitutional implications of some of the decisions and recommendations made and/or accepted at Prague.

These include that

- (1) with the possible exception of the President and General Secretary, elected officers/members of Executive Board and Council should not be allowed to serve for more than two consecutive terms, i.e., eight years. They may, however, be re-elected again after a gap of one term of four years;
- (2) a system of rotation should be designed so that all officers, Council members, etc., should not have to be elected at the same time. There should be elections for an agreed proportion of members every two years (i.e., at every General Assembly) as distinct from every four years which is the current practice;
- (3) a "small inner cabinet" should be established from the Executive Board (which was becoming too large to efficiently function as a genuine Executive Board) to assist the President in the running of the Association. It is worth noting that the "cabinet system" is already functioning quite effectively;
- (4) the whole purpose and function of the Association's formally established, but not very clearly defined, sections should be re-examined. In the meantime, new Sections should not be formally established. It was generally accepted that several relatively informal but well-established and active groups, workshops, etc., were contributing more to the Association than some of the formally established Sections. These and other factors must be taken into consideration in the review of Sections. It was also agreed that the status of the head of Section re automatic membership of the International Council should be included in the review. In addition to the above it was noted with approval that the Political Communication Research Group and the Working Group on Sex Roles had established programmes and had attracted membership;
- (5) no member should hold more than one office or position. The main problem here has to do with heads of Sections who are also Vice Presidents.

SECTIONS

Heads of Sections, Robin Cheesman, Olga Linne, Bill Melody, Hamid Mowlana and Walery Pisarek recommend the following on the future work of Sections.

On the basis of our experience as Section heads during the Prague Conference, and before, we have agreed to follow certain rules for Section activities in the future:

- (1) By the conclusion of the International Council meeting between conferences (1985) we will have decided upon and co-ordinated the themes for our respective sessions during the next Conference (1986). These themes will be announced through the IAMCR newsletter.
- (2) We will announce deadlines for abstracts (1 March) and papers (15 June) through the newsletter. If these deadlines are not met, there is no guarantee that a paper can be presented in the Sections.
- (3) We will avoid joint Section sessions, in order not to reduce the number of sessions. Instead, we will attempt to refer papers to other Sections, if they do not seem to fit in the Section to which they were sent first.
- (4) Lengthy papers should not be read. The presentation of each paper will be limited to 15-20 minutes, in order to leave due time for discussion.
- (5) Papers that do not fit into the formal programme, or whose authors do not wish to present them, can be accepted for distribution.
- (6) People wishing to present papers at the next Conference (1986), are encouraged to contact Section heads as soon as possible. This will also help us to define themes for our sessions.

We recommend the 1986 Conference organizers to leave a half to a full free day in the middle of the Conference, for informal meetings (and shopping, etc.). Session scheduling should allow for more and shorter sessions, e.g. with two afternoon sessions and later supper.

PLEASE WRITE TO THE HEADS OR TO HEADQUARTERS WITH YOUR REACTIONS.

ELECTIONS

As the situation stands all the officers, members of the Executive Board and International Council elected at the Prague Assembly are elected for four years.

THE LIST OF THOSE ELECTED TOGETHER WITH THE LIST OF SECTION PRESIDENTS IS ENCLOSED

It will be noted that the Board has been enlarged and that the representativeness of both Board and Council is clearly demonstrated. Congratulations to all new members and in particular to the new Secretary-General, Tamas Szecsco, and the new Treasurer, Olof Hulten. They, joined by Gee-Gee Robinson and Cees Hamelink, constitute the inner cabinet, referred to earlier, which assists the President in the administration of the Association's business.

The President thanked the Assembly for re-electing him for a fourth term, but warned members that if this went on much longer the Association would have to assume responsibility for his pension rights and relevant benefits!!!!

MEMBERSHIP AND FINANCE

The membership position was reasonably stable although the application of the lapsation clause over the past year had led to a slight reduction in numbers. However, the figures now provided a more realistic picture of real involvement. This reduction had been reflected in a slight drop in income from membership subscriptions and for the first time for some years expenditure had exceeded receipts (just, Sfr.146) over the two year period. An unusual item of expenditure in this period had been the cost of producing the Caracas monograph. Previous monographs had been subsidized by Unesco and the cost of the Paris monograph had been met by Francois-Xavier Hutin and his committee. Unesco had agreed to subsidize the Prague monograph. The balance of some Sfr.70,000 gave a somewhat rosier picture than the true state of affairs warranted because several substantial accounts had still to be paid. A figure in the region of Sfr.50,000 would be a fairer indication of the situation.

A great deal of "hidden" support (estimated at around Sfr.50,000 p.a.) as always comes from the Centre for Mass Communication Research at Leicester University and this enables the Association to be administered without throwing extra burdens on its members. Much of the travel expenditure incurred by officers carrying out the business of the Association is also paid from other sources. However, should the Association decide to depart from its relatively modest level of operations and attempt something more ambitious, subscriptions would have to be increased or funds obtained from external sources.

This problem would have to be faced by the Association in its consideration of the proposals for publications, publicity and recruitment.

Currently membership stood at around 1,500 from 65 different countries. The Assembly accepted 108 new individual members and 17 new institutions and noted that in the same period 1982-1984 the membership of 155 individuals and 22 institutions had lapsed. Countries represented in the Association for the first time included Cuba, Ghana, Jordan, Kuwait, Liberia, New Zealand, Tanzania and Zambia.

SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 1985 ARE NOW DUE

AN INVOICE IS ENCLOSED
PLEASE DEAL WITH IT AT YOUR EARLY CONVENIENCE

SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 1984 ARE NOW OVERDUE

PLEASE CHECK
THE ASSOCIATION WILL STILL BE PLEASED TO RECEIVE THEM
IT IS NEVER TOO LATE

FUTURE CONFERENCES, ASSEMBLIES AND MEETINGS

One of the several encouraging signs at the Prague Conference was the number of countries wishing to stage future conferences. In some shape or form offers were received from Spain, Brazil, India, Yugoslavia, Canada and U.S.A. It was decided that, if at all possible, the Association should keep to the West, East, South rotation system and that led the Assembly to take the firm decision that the 1988 Conference should be held in Barcelona. The choice for 1986 was between India and Brazil. The necessary assurances have now been obtained from India and the 1986 Conference will be held in New Delhi in August 1986. The provisional dates are 25th to 28th August. Dr. Binod Agrawal is acting as organizing secretary for our Indian hosts and he and one other colleague will join the officers of the Association for a meeting of the Programme Committee in either The Hague or Amsterdam on February 4th and 5th. Peggy Gray and the President plan to visit India some weeks after this meeting.

PLEASE WRITE SOON WITH PROPOSALS, SUGGESTIONS, ETC., FOR THE 1986 CONFERENCE. PEGGY GRAY HAS ALREADY MADE TENTATIVE ARRANGEMENTS FOR A SPECIAL FLIGHT FROM LONDON AT A ROUND TRIP FARE OF £370 (PROVISIONAL). APPARENTLY THERE IS SOME ADVANTAGE IN USING LONDON AS A STAGING POINT. THOSE INTERESTED SHOULD GET IN TOUCH WITH HER AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. EVERY ATTEMPT WILL BE MADE TO KEEP THE REGISTRATION / CONFERENCE FEES, INCLUDING ACCOMMODATION, AT A LEVEL SIMILAR TO THOSE IN PRAGUE.

It has been proposed that the next meeting of the International Council should be held in France in September 1985, probably on the 25th and 26th. Francois-Xavier Hutin has kindly agreed to host the meeting.

UNESCO

It was reported that the Association had continued to enjoy an effective cooperative working relationship with Unesco within the framework of its approved research programme. Since the last report projects have been completed in media education, media and disarmament and media and ethnicity. The last-named project led to a publication and it is still hoped that the report on the 27-nations international comparative news study will be published by Unesco. This comparative news study represented a unique achievement in international research cooperation. It provided an excellent example of what can be achieved when Unesco is enabled to support an active N.G.O. in the execution of its research programme.

A substantial grant from Unesco in support of the work of the Professional Education Section of this Association enabled this Section to organize a workshop in cooperation with other organizations including AEJ, IOJ, FELAFACS and journalist associations in Asia and Africa, immediately prior to the Prague Conference. It also made it possible for several of the Association's members from the Third World to participate in this Conference who otherwise would not have been able to attend. The Association looks forward to further cooperation in this connection.

Last year, in response to a request from Unesco, the Association submitted recommendations for a research programme within the framework of Unesco's declared aims and objectives and assured Unesco of IAMCR's willingness to cooperate in the execution of the programme.

Unfortunately, it would appear that not all member states recognize the importance of research so it may be impossible to finance the research programme which, according to an official Unesco document of 1971, is the only means of providing the information which is the sine qua non of enlightened communication policies. The Association urged Unesco and the member states to be faithful to its declared commitment to research so that the fruitful cooperation which has characterized Unesco/IAMCR relationships at several levels across a wide range of issues and problems may be extended to an era when communication research is likely to be more important than ever before. Members were urged by Alan Hancock, the Unesco representative at Prague, to speak up and give support to Unesco in its present crisis following the proposals for some countries to withdraw from the International Organization. The President has written to several of the agencies involved reminding them, amongst other things, of the important part played by Unesco in the development of mass communications research. Members may care to write on this matter, either directly to the appropriate bodies, or through the President.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

Links with associations and organizations concerned with the professional training of journalists have already been mentioned and the Prague meeting provided the opportunity to strengthen our established links with the Union for Democratic Communication, I.C.A., GRACIAS, I.A.S.P.M. and W.A.C.C. Funds provided by this last-named Association enabled some members to go to Prague who otherwise would not have made it. There is a considerable degree of overlapping in membership between these bodies and quite a number of IAMCR members will be contributing to the next I.C.A. CONFERENCE WHICH WILL BE HELD IN HAWAII, MAY 23RD-27TH 1985. Information may be obtained from Brenda Dervin of the School of Communications, University of Washington, Seattle, U.S.A. Brenda visited headquarters after the Prague meeting and her presidency of I.C.A. clearly augurs well for good relationships between the two Associations.

HONORARY MEMBERSHIP

Congratulations to Juan Beneyto, Emil Dusiska and Dallas Smythe on being elected honorary members of the Association.

TRIBUTES TO DECEASED MEMBERS

The Executive Board, International Council and General Assembly paid tribute to those members (Philip Elliott, Joe Klapper, Vladimir Klimes, Ithiel de Sola Pool and Ignacy Waniewicz) who had passed away during the year.

MEMBERS ARE INVITED TO WRITE TO HEADQUARTERS ON ANY MATTER THEY CONSIDER TO BE IN THE ASSOCIATION'S INTEREST.